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LOUISE MÜHLBACH

"PUT OUT THAT LIGHT," SAID THE KING, "THE MOON WILL BE OUR TORCH AND WILL GLORIFY OUR BED OF STRAW"

Muhlbach—"Frederick the Great and His Family," Vol. Two, p. 346

THE WORKS OF

LOUISE MÜHLBACH

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES

FREDERICK THE GREAT AND HIS FAMILY

FRONTISPIECES IN COLOR FROM PAINTINGS BY
WALTER H. EVERETT

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FREDERICK THE GREAT AND HIS FAMILY.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE KING.

THE king laid his flute aside, and with his hands folded behind his back, walked thoughtfully up and down his room in Sans-Souci. His countenance was now tranquil, his brow cloudless; with the aid of music he had harmonized his soul, and the anger and displeasure he had so shortly before felt were soothed by the melodious notes of his flute.

The king was no longer angry, but melancholy, and the smile that played on his lip was so resigned and painful that the brave Marquis d'Argens would have wept had he seen it, and the stinging jest of Voltaire have been silenced.

But neither the marquis nor Voltaire, nor any of his friends were at present in Potsdam. D'Argens was in France, with his young wife, Barbe Cochois; Voltaire, after a succession of difficulties and quarrels, had departed forever; General Rothenberg had also departed to a land from which no one returns—he was dead! My lord marshal had returned to Scotland, Algarotti to Italy, and Bastiani still held his office in Breslau. Sans-Souci, that had been heretofore the seat of joy and laughing wit—Sans-Souci was now still and lonely; youth, beauty, and gladness had forsaken it forever; earnestness and duty had taken their place, and reigned in majesty within those walls that had so often echoed with the happy laugh and sparkling jest of the king's friends and contemporaries.

Frederick thought of this, as with folded hands he walked up and down, and recalled the past. Sunk in deep thought, he remained standing before a picture that hung on the wall above his secretary, which represented Barbarina in the fascinating costume of a shepherdess, as he had seen her for the first time ten years ago; it had been painted by Pesne for the king. What recollections,

what dreams arose before the king's soul as he gazed at that bewitching and lovely face; at those soft, melting eyes, whose glance had once made him so happy! But that was long ago; it had passed like a sunbeam on a rainy day, it had been long buried in clouds. These remembrances warmed the king's heart as he now stood so solitary and loveless before this picture; and he confessed to that sweet image, once so fondly loved, what he had never admitted to himself, that his heart was very lonely.

But these painful recollections, these sad thoughts, did not last. The king roused himself from those dangerous dreams, and on leaving the picture cast upon it almost a look of hatred.

"This is folly," he said; "I will to work."

He approached the secretary, and seized the sealed letters and packets that were lying there. "A letter and packet from the queen," he said, wonderingly opening the letter first. Casting a hasty glance through it, a mocking smile crossed his face. "She sends me a French translation of a prayer-book," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Poor queen! her heart is not yet dead, though, by Heaven! it has suffered enough."

He threw the letter carelessly aside, without glancing at the book; its sad, pleading prayer was but an echo of the thoughts trembling in her heart.

"Bagatelles! nothing more," he murmured, after reading the other letters and laying them aside. He then rang hastily, and bade the servant send Baron Pöllnitz to him as soon as he appeared in the audience-chamber.

A few minutes later the door opened, and the old, wrinkled, sweetly smiling face of the undaunted courtier appeared.

"Approach," said the king, advancing a few steps to meet him. "Do you bring me his submission? Does my brother Henry acknowledge that it is vain to defy my power?"

Pöllnitz shrugged his shoulders. "Sire," he said, sighing, "his highness will not understand that a prince must have no heart. He still continues in his disobedience, and declares that no man should marry a woman without loving her; that he would be contemptible and cowardly to allow himself to be forced to do what should be the free choice of his own heart."

Pöllnitz had spoken with downcast eyes and respectful countenance; he appeared not to notice that the king reddened and his eyes burned with anger.

"Ah! my brother dared to say that?" cried the king. "He has the Utopian thought to believe that he can defy my wishes. Tell him he is mistaken; he must submit to me as I had to submit to my father."

"He gives that as an example why he will not yield. He believes a forced marriage can never be a happy one; that your majesty had not only made yourself unhappy by your marriage, but also your queen, and that there was not a lady in the land who would exchange places with your wife."

The king glanced piercingly at Pöllnitz. "Do you know it would have been better had you forgotten a few of my wise brother's words?"

"Your majesty commanded me to tell you faithfully every word the prince said."

"And you are too much a man of truth and obedience, too little of a courtier, not to be frank and faithful. Is it not so? Ah! *vraiment*, I know you, and I know very well that you are playing a double game. But I warn you not to follow the promptings of your wicked heart. I desire my brother to marry, do you hear? I will it, and you, the grand chamberlain, Baron Pöllnitz, shall feel my anger if he does not consent."

"And if he does?" said Pöllnitz, in his laughing, shameless manner; "if I persuade the prince to submit to your wishes, what recompense shall I receive?"

"On the day of their betrothal, I will raise your income five hundred crowns, and pay your debts."

"Ah, sire, in what a pitiable dilemma you are placing me! Your majesty wishes Prince Henry to engage himself as soon as possible, and I must now wish it to be as late as possible."

"And why?"

"Because I must hasten to make as many debts as possible, that your majesty may pay them."

"You are and will remain an unmitigated fool; old age will not even cure you," said the king, smiling. "But speak, do you think my brother may be brought to reason?"

Pöllnitz shrugged his shoulders, gave a sly smile, but was silent.

"You do not answer me. Is my brother in love? and has he confided in you?"

"Sire, I believe the prince is in love from *ennui* alone, but he swears it is his first love."

"That is an oath that is repeated to each lady-love; I am not afraid of it," said the king, smiling "Who is the enchantress that has heard his first loving vows? She is doubtless a fairy—a goddess of beauty."

"Yes, sire, she is young and beautiful, and declares it is also her first love, so no one can doubt its purity; no one understands love as well as this fair lady: no other than Madame von Kleist, who, as your majesty remembers, was lately divorced from her husband."

"And is now free to love again, as it appears," said the king, with a mocking smile. "But the beautiful Louise von Schwerin is a dangerous, daring woman, and we must check her clever plans in the bud. If she desires to be loved by my brother, she possesses knowledge, beauty, and experience to gain her point and to lead him into all manner of follies. This affair must be brought quickly to a close, and Prince Henry acknowledged to be the prince royal."

"Prince Henry goes this evening to Berlin to attend a feast given by the Prince of Prussia," whispered Pöllnitz.

"Ah! it is true the prince's arrest ceases at six o'clock, but he will not forget that he needs permission to leave Potsdam."

"He will forget it, sire."

The king walked up and down in silence, and his countenance assumed an angry and threatening appearance. "This struggle must be brought to a close, and that speedily. My brother must submit to my authority. Go and watch his movements; as soon as he leaves, come to me."

Long after Pöllnitz had left him, the king paced his chamber in deep thought. "Poor Henry! I dare not sympathize with you; you are a king's son—that means a slave to your position. Why has Providence given hearts to kings as to other men? Why do we thirst so for love? as the intoxicating drink is always denied us, and we dare not drink it even when offered by the most bewitching enchantress!"

Involuntarily his eye rested upon the beautiful picture of Barbarina. But he would have no pity with himself, as he dared not show mercy to his brother. Seizing the silver bell, he rang it hastily.

"Take that picture from the wall, and carry it immediately to the inspector, and tell him to hang it in the picture-gallery," said Frederick.

He looked on quietly as the servant took the picture down and carried it from the room, then sighed and gazed long at the place where it had hung.

"Empty and cold! The last token of my youth is gone! I am now the king, and, with God's blessing, will be the father of my people."

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE HENRY

Prince Henry sat quiet and motionless in his lonely room; dark thoughts seemed to trouble him; his brow was clouded, his lips compressed. Had you not known him, you would have taken him

for the king, so great was the resemblance of the two brothers; but it was only an outward resemblance. The prince had not the spiritual expression, his eyes had not the passionate fire, his face (beautiful as it was) wanted the fascinating geniality, the sparkling inspiration, that at all times lighted the king's countenance like a sunbeam.

The prince possessed a greater mind, a clearer understanding, but he wanted soul and poetic feeling, and allowed himself at times to ridicule his brother's poetic efforts. The king, knowing this, was inclined to regard the shortcomings of the prince as a determined contempt and resistance to his command; and as the prince became more reckless and more indifferent, he became more severe and harsh. Thus the struggle commenced that had existed for some time between the two brothers.

For the last four days the prince had been in arrest for disobeying orders, but the hour of his release was approaching, and he awaited it with impatience.

The bell of the nearest church had just announced the hour of six. The door opened immediately, and an officer, in the name of the king, pronounced his arrest at an end.

The prince answered with a low bow, and remained seated, pointing haughtily to the door; but as the officer left him he arose and paced hastily to and fro.

"He treats me like a school-boy," he murmured; "but I shall show him that I have a will of my own! I will not be intimidated —I will not submit; and if the king does not cease to annoy me, if he continues to forget that I am not a slave, but son and brother of a king, no motives shall restrain me, and I also will forget, as he does, that I am a prince, and remember only that I am a free, responsible man. He wishes me to marry, and therefore has me followed, and surrounds me with spies. He wishes to force me to marry. Well, I will marry, but I will choose my own wife!"

The prince had just made this resolve, when the door opened, and the servant announced that Messrs. Kalkreuth and Kaphengst awaited his commands.

He bade them enter, and advancing smilingly gave them his hand.

"Welcome! welcome!" he said; "the cage is open, and I may enjoy a little air and sunshine; let us not delay to make use of this opportunity. Our horses shall be saddled."

"They are already saddled, prince," said Baron Kalkreuth. "I have ordered them to the court, and as soon as it is dark we will mount them."

"What! is it not best that we should mount before my door and ride openly away?" said the prince, wonderingly.

"It is my opinion that is the best plan," cried Baron Kaphengst, laughing gayly. "Every one will believe your highness to be simply taking a ride, while curiosity would be raised if we left the city on foot."

"I think leaving in the dark, and on foot, looks as if I were afraid," said the prince, thoughtfully.

"Secrecy is good for priests and old women, but not for us," cried Kaphengst.

"Secrecy suits all who wish to do wrong," said Kalkreuth, earnestly.

The prince glanced hastily at him. "You believe, then, we are about to do wrong?"

"I dare not speak of your highness, but we two are certainly doing wrong; we are about to commit an act of insubordination. But still, my prince, I am ready to do so, as your highness wishes us to accompany you."

The prince did not answer, but stepped to the window, and looked out thoughtfully and silently. In a few moments he returned, looking calm and resolute.

"Kalkreuth is right—we were going to do wrong, and we must avoid it. I shall write to the king, and ask leave for you and myself to go to Berlin."

"That is, unfortunately, impossible," said a sweet voice behind him, and as the prince turned he saw the smiling face of Pöllnitz. "I beg pardon, your highness, for having entered unannounced, but you allowed me to come at this hour and give you an account of the commissions you gave me."

"Why do you say it is impossible to obtain leave of the king to-day?" asked Henry, hastily.

"Because his majesty is already in the concert-saloon, and your highness knows that he has strictly forbidden any one to disturb him there."

"We shall, then, have to give up our plan and remain here," said the prince.

Kaphengst glanced angrily and threateningly at his friend.

"And why should your highness do this?" asked Pöllnitz, astonished. "All your preparations are made, all your commands fulfilled. I have procured your costumes; no one will recognize you, and if they should, would not dare to betray you to the king. Only two persons know that you are to visit the ball, the Prince of Prussia, and a lovely lady, whose beautiful eyes were misty with tears when I delivered her your message. 'Tell the prince,' she murmured, in a tender voice, 'I will await him there, even if I knew the king would crush me with his anger.'"

The prince blushed with joy. "And you say it is impossible for me to see the king?"

"Impossible, my prince."

"Well, we will have to renounce it," said the prince, sighing.

"Renounce seeing the king, yes! for he will not leave his rooms in Sans-Souci to-day."

"Then we would be entirely safe; he would not notice our departure," said Kaphengst, quickly.

"Entirely safe," said Pöllnitz.

"That is, if Baron Pöllnitz does not himself inform the king," said Baron Kalkreuth, whose quick, clear glance rested upon the smiling face of the courtier, and appeared to read his inmost thoughts.

Baron Pöllnitz cast a suspicious and angry glance at Kalkreuth. "I did not know that borrowing money from you gave you the right to speak rudely to me!"

"Silence! gentlemen," cried the prince, who, until now, had stood quietly struggling with his own wishes. "Take your cloaks and let us walk. Did you not say that horses were awaiting us at the door, Baron Kalkreuth?"

"I said so, your highness."

"And you Pöllnitz? Did you not say that three costumes awaited us in Berlin?"

"Yes, your highness."

"Well, then," said the prince, smiling, "we must not allow the horses and costumes to await us any longer. Come, gentlemen, we will ride to Berlin."

"Really it was hard to get him off," murmured Pöllnitz, as he regained the street, and saw the three young men fading in the distance. "The good prince had quite a dutiful emotion; if the king only knew it, he would forgive him all, and renounce the idea of his marriage. But that would not suit me—my debts would not be paid! I must not tell the king of his brother's inward struggle."

"Well!" said the king, as Pöllnitz entered, "has my brother really gone to Berlin?"

"Yes, your majesty, and accompanied by the two Messieurs—"

"Silence!" cried the king, hastily; "I do not wish to know their names, I should have to punish them also. He has then gone, and without any hesitation, any reluctance?"

"Yes, sire, without hesitation. He thinks he has the right to go where he pleases, and to amuse himself as he can."

"Order the carriage, Pöllnitz," said the king. "Without doubt my brother has taken the shortest road to Berlin?"

"Yes, sire."

"Then there is no danger of our meeting them and being recognized; and as we have relays on the road, we will reach Berlin before them."

CHAPTER III.

LOUISE VON KLEIST.

MADAME VON KLEIST was alone in her boudoir. She had just completed her toilet, and was viewing herself with considerable pleasure in a large Venetian glass. She had reason to be pleased. The costume of an *odalisque* became her wonderfully; suited her luxuriant beauty, her large, dreamy blue eyes, her full red lips, her slender, swaying form. At twenty-eight, Louise von Kleist was still a sparkling beauty; the many trials and sorrows she had passed through had not scattered the roses from her cheek, nor banished youth from her heart.

Louise von Kleist resembled greatly the little Louise von Schwerin of earlier days—the little dreamer who found it romantic to love a gardener, and was quite ready to flee with him to a paradise of love. The king's watchfulness saved her from this romantic folly, and gave her another husband. This unhappy match was now at an end. Louise was again free. She still felt in her heart some of the wild love of romance and adventure of the little Louise; she was the same daring, dreamy, impressible Louise, only now she was less innocent. The little coquette from instinct was changed into a coquette from knowledge.

She stood before the glass and surveyed once more her appearance; then acknowledged with a pleased smile that she was beautiful enough to fascinate all men, to arouse in all hearts a painful longing.

"But I shall love no one but the prince," she said, "and when my power over him is sufficient to induce him to marry me, I shall reward him by my faith, and entire submission to his wishes. Oh! I shall be a virtuous wife, a true and faithful mother; and my lovely little Camilla shall find in her mother a good and noble example. I shall promise this to my angel with my farewell kiss; and then—to the ball!"

She entered the next chamber, and stood at her child's bed. What a strange sight! This woman, in a fantastic, luxuriant costume, bending over the cot of the little girl. with such tender, pious looks, with folded hands, and soft, murmuring lips, uttering a prayer or holy wish!

"How beautiful she is!" murmured Louise, not dreaming that her own beauty at this moment beamed with touching splendor—that mother love had changed the alluring coquette into an adorable saint—"how beautiful she is!"

The gay, ringing laughter of her daughter interrupted her; the child opened her large black eyes, and looked amused.

"You naughty child, you were not asleep," said Louise.

"No, mamma, I was not asleep; I was playing comedy."

"Ah! and who taught you to play comedy, you silly child?" said Louise, tenderly.

The child looked earnestly before her for a few moments as children are wont to do when a question surprises them.

"I believe, mamma," she said, slowly—"I believe I learned it from you."

"From me, Camilla? When have you seen me act?"

"Oh, very often," she cried, laughing. "Just a few days ago, mamma, don't you remember when we were laughing and talking so merrily together, Prince Henry was announced, and you sent me into the next room, but the door was open, and I saw very well that you made a sad face, and I heard the prince ask you how you were, and you answered, 'I am sick, your highness, and how could it be otherwise, as I am always sad or weeping?' Now, mother, was not that acting?"

Louise did not answer. Breathing heavily, she laid her hand upon her heart, for she felt a strange sorrow and indescribable fear.

Camilla continued, "Oh! and I saw how tenderly the prince looked at you; how he kissed you, and said you were as lovely as an angel. Oh, mamma, I too shall be beautiful, and beloved by a prince!"

"To be beautiful, darling, you must be good and virtuous," said the fair *odalisque*, earnestly.

Little Camilla arose in her bed; the white gown fell from her shoulders and exposed her soft childish form, her brown ringlets curled down her neck and lost themselves in her lace-covered dress. The chandelier that hung from the ceiling lighted her lovely face, and made the gold and silver embroidered robes and jewels of her mother sparkle brilliantly.

At this moment, as with folded arms she glanced up at her mother, she looked like an angel, but she had already dangerous and earthly thoughts in her heart.

"Mamma," she said, "why should I be virtuous, when you are not?"

Louise trembled, and looked terrified at her daughter. "Who told you I was not virtuous?"

"My poor, dear papa told me when he was here the last time. Oh, he told me a great deal, mamma! He told," continued the child, with a sly smile, "how you loved a beautiful gardener, and ran off with him, and how he, at the command of the king, married you and saved you from shame; and he said you were not at all grateful, but had often betrayed and deceived him, and, because he was so unhappy with you, he drank so much wine to forget his sorrow. Oh, mamma, you don't know how poor papa cried as he told me all this, and besought me not to become like you, but to be good, that every one might love and respect me!"

Whilst Camilla spoke, her mother had sunk slowly, as if crushed, to the floor; and, with her face buried in the child's bed, sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry, mamma," said Camilla, pleadingly; "believe me, I will not do as papa says, and I will not be so stupid as to live in a small town, where it is so still and lonesome."

As her mother still wept, Camilla continued, as if to quiet her: "I shall be like you, mamma; indeed, I will. Oh, you should but see how I watch you, and notice how you smile at all the gentlemen, what soft eyes you make, and then again, how cold and proud you are, and then look at them so tenderly! Oh, I have noticed all, and I shall do just the same, and I will run away with a gardener, but I will not let papa catch me—no, not I."

"Hush, child, hush!" cried the mother, rising, pale and trembling, from her knees; "you must become a good and virtuous girl, and never run away with a man. Forget what your bad father has told you; you know he hates me, and has told you all these falsehoods to make you do the same."

"Mamma, can you swear that it is not true?"

"Yes, my child, I can swear it."

"You did not run off with a gardener?"

"No, my child. Have I not told you that a virtuous girl never runs away?"

"You did not make papa unhappy, and, being his wife, love other men?"

"No, my daughter."

"Mamma," said the child, after a long pause, "can you give me your right hand, and swear you did not?"

Louise hesitated a moment; a cold shiver ran through her, she felt as if she was about to perjure herself; but as she looked into the beautiful face of her child, whose eyes were fixed on her with a strange expression, she overcame her unwillingness.

"Here is my hand—I swear that all your father told you is false!"

Camilla laughed gleefully. "Oh, mamma, I have caught you:

you always want me to tell the truth, and never give my right hand when a thing is not true, and now you have done it yourself."

"What have I done?" said the mother, trembling.

"You gave me your right hand, and swore that all papa told me was false; and I say it is true, and you have sworn falsely."

"Why do you believe that, Camilla?" she asked.

"I don't believe it, I know it," said the child, with a sly smile. "When papa spoke to you, for the last time, and told you good-by forever, he told you the same he had told me. Oh! I was there and heard all; you did not see me slip into the room and hide behind the fire-place. Papa told you that you had been the cause of all his unhappiness and shame; that from the day you had run off with the gardener and he, at the king's command, went after you, and married you—from that day, he had been a lost man, and when he said that, you cried, but did not tell him, as you told me, that it was not true."

Louise did not answer. This last taunt had crushed her heart, and silenced her. Still leaning on the bed, she looked at her child with painful tenderness. Camilla's mocking laughter had pierced her soul as with a dagger.

"Lost," she murmured, "both of us lost!"

With passionate despair she threw her arms around the child, and pressed her closely; kissed her wildly again and again, and covered her face with burning tears.

"No, Camilla, no! you shall not be lost, you must remain good and pure! Every child has its guardian angel; pray, my child, pray that your angel may watch over you!"

She pressed her again in her arms, then returned to her chamber, sadder and more hopeless than she had ever been before.

But this unusual sadness commenced to annoy her; her heart was not accustomed to feel sorrow, and her remorseful, dreary feeling made her shudder. "If the carriage would but come!" she murmured, and then, as if to excuse her thoughtlessness, she added, "it is now my holy duty to listen to the prince; I must regain the respect of my child. Yes, yes, I must become the wife of Henry! I can accomplish this, for the prince loves me truly."

And now, she was again the coquette, whose captivating smile harmonized perfectly with her alluring costume—no longer the tender mother, no longer the sinner suffering from repentance and self-reproach.

She stood before the glass, and arranged her disordered dress and smoothed her dishevelled hair.

"I must be bewitching and fascinating," she murmured, with a smile that showed two rows of pearl-like teeth; "the prince must

gain courage from my glance, to offer me his hand. Oh, I know he is quite prepared to do so, if it were only to annoy his brother!"

As she saw the carriage drive up, she exclaimed, with sparkling eyes, "The battle begins—to victory!"

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE MASKED BALL.

THE feast had commenced. As Louise von Kleist, the beautiful *odalisque*, entered the dancing-saloon, she was almost blinded by the gay and sparkling assembly. The fairy-like and fantastic robes sparkled with gold and jewels. The sea of light thrown from the crystal chandelier upon the mirrors and ornaments of the brilliant saloon dazzled the eye. The entertainments of the Prince of Prussia were renowned for their taste and splendor.

Unrecognized, the beautiful Louise slipped through the gay assembly of masks, and, when detecting some friends under the muffled forms of their disguise, she murmured their names, and some mischievous and witty remark; then springing gayly on to shoot again her arrow, and excite astonishment and surprise.

"Oh, that life were a masked ball!" she murmured softly to herself, "mysterious and sweet! where you find more than you seek, and guess more than is known. No one recognizes me here. The brave and handsome Count Troussel, who is leaning against that pillar, and casting such melancholy glances through the crowd, hunting for the one his heart adores, never dreams that she is standing opposite him, and is laughing at his perplexity. No, he does not recognize me, and no one knows my costume but the prince and Pöllnitz, and as they have not yet found me, I conclude they have not arrived. I will therefore amuse myself during their absence."

She was just approaching the sentimental cavalier, when she suddenly felt her arm touched, and, turning around, saw two masks wrapped in dark dominoes before her.

"Beautiful *odalisque*, I bring you your sultan," murmured one of them, in whom she recognized Baron Pöllnitz.

"And where is my sultan?" she asked.

"Here," said the second mask, offering the beautiful lady his arm. Louise saw those glorious eyes beaming upon her through his mask—eyes which the king and Prince Henry alone possessed.

"Ah, my prince!" she murmured softly and reproachfully, "you see that it is I who have waited."

The prince did not answer, but conducted her hastily through the crowd. They had soon reached the end of the saloon. A small flight of steps led them to a little boudoir opening on a balcony. Into this boudoir Pöllnitz led the silent pair, then bowing low he left them.

"My God! your highness, if we should be surprised here!"

"Fear nothing, we will not be surprised. Pöllnitz guards the door. Now, as we are alone and undisturbed, let us lay aside our disguises."

Thus speaking, the supposed prince removed his mask and laid it upon the table.

"The king!" cried Louise, terrified and stepping back.

The king's eyes rested upon her with a piercing glance. "What!" he asked, "are you still acting? You appear astonished; and still you must have known me. Who but the king would show the beautiful Madame von Kleist such an honor? In what other cavalier could you place such perfect confidence as to accompany him into this lonely boudoir? with whom but the king could you have trusted your fair fame? You need not be alarmed; to be in my presence is to be under my protection—the kind guardianship of your king. I thank you that you knew me, and, knowing me, followed me trustingly."

The searching glance of the king alarmed Louise; his mocking words bewildered her, and she was incapable of reply.

She bowed silently, and allowed herself to be conducted to the divan.

"Sit down, and let us chat awhile," said the king. "You know I hate the noise of a feast, and love to retire into some corner, unnoticed and unseen. I had no sooner discovered the fair Louise under this charming costume, than I knew I had found good company. I ordered Pöllnitz to seek out for us some quiet spot, where we might converse freely. Commence, therefore."

"Of what shall I speak, your majesty?" said Louise, confused and frightened. She knew well that the king had not found her by chance, but had sought her with a determined purpose.

"Oh! that is a question whose *naïveté* reminds me of the little Louise Schwerin of earlier days. Well, let us speak on that subject which interests most deeply all who know you; let us speak of your happiness. You sigh. Have you already paid your tribute? Do you realize the fleetness of all earthly bliss?"

"Ah! your majesty, an unhappy marriage is the most bitter offering that can be made to experience," sighed Madame von Kliest. "My life was indeed wretched until released by your kindness from that bondage."

"Ah, yes, it is true you are divorced. When and upon whom will you now bestow this small, white hand?"

Louise looked up astonished. "What!" she stammered, confused, "your majesty means—"

"That you will certainly marry again. As beautiful a lady as you will always be surrounded by lovers, and I sincerely hope that you will marry. You should go forward as an example to my brothers, your youthful playmates, and I will tell my brother Henry that marriage is not so bad a thing, as the beautiful Madame von Kleist has tried it for the second time."

"I doubt very much, sire," said Louise, timidly, "if the example of so insignificant a person would have the desired effect upon the prince."

"You do yourself injustice. The prince has too strong an admiration for you, not to be influenced by your encouraging example. My brother must and shall marry according to his birth. I am assured that, contrary to my wishes and commands, he is about to make a secret and illegitimate marriage. I am not yet acquainted with the name of his wily mistress, but I shall learn it, and, when once noted in my memory, woe be unto her, for I shall never acknowledge such a marriage, and I shall take care that his mistress is not received at court—she shall be regarded as a dishonored woman."

"Your majesty is very stern and pitiless toward the poor prince," said Madame Kleist, who had succeeded in suppressing her own emotions, and, following the lead of the king, she was desirous to let it appear that the subject was one of no personal interest to herself.

"No," said the king, "I am not cruel and not pitiless. I must forget that I am a brother, and remember only I am a king, not only for the good of my family, but for the prosperity of my people. My brother must marry a princess of wealth and influence. Tell Prince Henry this. Now," said the king, with an engaging smile, "let us speak of your lovely self. You will, of course, marry again. Have you not confidence enough in me to tell me the name of your happy and favored lover?"

"Sire," said Louise, smiling, "I do not know it myself, and to show what unbounded confidence I have in your majesty, I modestly confess that I am not positively certain whether among my many followers there is one who desires to be the successor of Kleist. It is easy to have many lovers, but somewhat difficult to marry suitably."

"We need a marrying man to chase away the crowd of lovers," said the king, smiling. "Think awhile—let your lovers pass in

review before you—perhaps you may find among them one who is both ardent and desirable."

Louise remained thoughtful for a few moments. The king observed her closely.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "have you made your selection?"

Madame von Kleist sighed, and her beautiful bright eyes filled with tears. She took leave of her most cherished and ambitious dream—bade farewell to her future of regal pomp and splendor.

"Yes, sire, I have found an *épouseur*, who only needs encouragement, to offer me his heart and hand."

"Is he of good family?"

"Yes, sire."

"Military?"

"Yes, sire. He wears only a captain's epaulets. Your majesty sees that I am modest."

"On the day of his marriage he shall be major. When the Church pronounces her blessing, the king's blessing shall not be wanting. We are, of course, agreed. When will you be engaged?"

"Sire, that depends upon my lover, and when I succeed in bringing him to terms."

"We will say in eight days You see I am anxious to become speedily acquainted with one blissful mortal, and I think that the husband of the beautiful Madame Kleist will be supremely happy. In eight days, then, you will be engaged, and, to complete your good work, you must announce this happy fact to my brother Henry. Of course, he must not even surmise that you sacrifice yourself in order to set him a good example. No, you will complete your noble work, and tell him that a love which you could not control induced you to take this step; and that he may not doubt your words, you will tell your story cheerfully—yes, joyously."

"Sire, it is too much—I cannot do it," cried Madame von Kleist. "It is enough to trample upon my own heart; your majesty cannot desire me to give the prince his death-blow."

The king's eyes flashed angrily, but he controlled himself.

"His death!" he repeated, shrugging his shoulders, "as if men died of such small wounds. You know better yourself. You know that the grave of one love is the cradle of another. Be wise, and do as I tell you: in eight days you will be engaged, and then you will have the kindness to acquaint Prince Henry with your happy prospects."

"Ah, sire, do not be so cruel as to ask this of me," cried Louise, gliding from the divan upon her knees, "be merciful. I am ready to obey the commands of my king, to make the sacrifice that is asked of me—let it not be too great a one. Your majesty asks that

I shall draw down the contempt of the man I love upon myself; that this man must not only give me up, but scorn me. You require too much. This is more than the strongest, bravest heart can endure. Your majesty knows that the prince loves me passionately. Ah, sire, your brother would have forfeited his rank and your favor by marrying me, but he would have been a happy man; and I ask the king if that is not, at last, the best result? Are you, sire, content and happy since you trampled your breathing, loving heart to death at the foot of the throne? You command your brother to do as you have done. Well, sire, I submit—not only to resign the prince, but to marry again, to marry without love. Perhaps my soul will be lost by this perjury, but what matters that—it is a plaything in the hands of the king? He may break my heart, but it shall not be dishonored and trodden in the dust. The prince shall cease to love me, but I will not be despised by him. He shall not think me a miserable coquette, despise, and laugh at me. Now, sire, you can crush me in your anger. I have said what I had to say—you know my decision."

She bowed her head almost to the earth; motionless, kneeling at the foot of the king, her hands folded on her breast, she might in reality have been taken for an *odalisque* but that her sad, tearful face was not in unison with the situation or costume.

A long pause ensued—a solemn, fearful pause. The king struggled with his rage, Louise with her disappointment and distress. Sounds of laughter, the gay notes of music reached them from the dancing-saloon. The ball had commenced, and youth and beauty were mingling in the dance. These sounds aroused the king, and the sad contrast made Louise shudder.

"You will not, then, comply with my request?" said the king, sternly.

"Sire, I cannot!" murmured Louise, raising her hands imploringly to the king.

"You cannot!" cried the king, whose face glowed with anger; "you cannot, that means you will not, because your vain, coquettish heart will not resign the love of the prince. You submit to resign his hand, because you must; but you wish to retain his love: he must think of you as a heavenly ideal, to be adored and longed for, placed amongst the stars for worship. Ah, madame, you are not willing to make the gulf between you impassable! You say you wish, at least, to retain the respect of Prince Henry. I ask you, madame, what you have done to deserve his respect? You were an ungrateful and undutiful daughter; you did not think of the shame and sorrow you prepared for your parents, when you arranged your flight with the gardener. I succeeded in rescuing you from dishonor by marrying you to a brave and noble cavalier. It depended upon

you entirely to gain his love and respect, but you forgot your duty as a wife, as you had forgotten it as a daughter. You had no pity with the faults and follies of your husband, you drove him to despair. At last, to drown his sorrows, he became a drunkard, and you, instead of remaining at his side to encourage and counsel him, deserted him, and so heartlessly exposed his shame that I, to put an end to the scandal, permitted your divorce. You not only forgot your duty as a wife and daughter, but also as a mother. You have deprived your child of a father, you have made her an orphan; you have soiled, almost depraved her young soul; and now, after all this, you wish to be adored and respected as a saint by my poor brother! No, madame! I shall know how to save him from this delusion; I shall tell to him and the world the history of little Louise von Schwerin! Fritz Wendel still lives, and, if you desire it, I can release him, and he may tell his romantic story."

"Oh, for the second time to-day I have heard that hateful name!" cried Louise; "the past is an avenger that pursues us mercilessly through our whole lives."

"Choose, madame!" said the king, after a pause; "will you announce your betrothal to my brother in a gay and unembarrassed tone, or shall I call Fritz Wendel, that he may sing the unhappy prince to sleep with his romantic history?"

Whilst the king spoke, Louise had raised herself slowly from her knees, and taken a seat upon the divan. Now rising, and bowing lowly, she said, with trembling lips and tearful voice: "Sire, I am prepared to do all that you wish. I shall announce my betrothal to the prince cheerfully, and without sighs or tears. But be merciful, and free me forever from that hideous spectre which seems ever at my side!"

"Do you mean poor Fritz Wendel?" said the king, smiling. "Well, on the day of your marriage I will send him as a soldier to Poland; there he may relate his love-adventures, but no one will understand him. Are you content?"

"I thank you, sire," said Louise, faintly.

"Ah, I see our conversation has agitated you a little!" said the king. "Fortunately, we are now at an end. In the next eight days, remember, you will be engaged!"

"Yes, sire."

"The day of your marriage, I will make your captain a major. You promise to tell my brother of your engagement, and that it is in accordance with the warmest wishes of your heart?"

"Yes, sire; and you will banish the gardener forever?"

"I will; but wait—one thing more. Where will you tell my brother of your engagement, and before what witnesses?"

"At the place and before the witnesses your majesty may select," said Madame von Kleist.

The king thought a moment. "You will do it in my presence," said he; "I will let you know the time and place through Pöllnitz. We have arranged our little affairs, madame, and we will descend to the saloon where, I think, your *épouseur* is sighing for your presence."

"Let him sigh, sire! With your permission, I should like to retire."

"Go, madame, where you wish. Pöllnitz will conduct you to your carriage."

He offered her his hand, and, with a friendly bow, led her to the door.

"Farewell, madame! I believe we part friends?"

"Sire," she answered, smiling faintly, "I can only say as the soldiers do, 'I thank you for your gracious punishment!'"

She bowed and left the room hastily, that the king might not see her tears.

CHAPTER V.

A SECRET CAPTAIN.

THE king looked long after her in silence; at first with an expression of deep pity, but this soon gave place to a gay, mocking smile.

"She is not a woman to take sorrow earnestly. When mourning no longer becomes her, she will lay it aside for the rosy robes of joy. She is a coquette, nothing more. It is useless to pity her."

He now stepped upon the balcony that overlooked the saloon, and glanced furtively from behind the curtains upon the gay assembly below.

"Poor, foolish mankind! how wise you might be, if you were not so very childish—if you did not seek joy and happiness precisely where it is not to be found! But how is this?" said the king, interrupting himself, "those two giant forms at the side of the little Armenians are certainly Barons Kalkreuth and Kaphengst, and that is my brother with them. Poor Henry! you have made a bad use of your freedom, and must, therefore, soon lose it. Ah! see how searchingly he turns his head, seeking his beautiful *odalisque!* In vain, my brother, in vain! For to-day, at least, we have made her a repentant Magdalen; to-morrow she will be again a life-enjoying Aspasia. Ah, the prince separates himself from his followers. I have a few words to whisper in the ear of the gay Kaphengst."

The king stepped back into the room, and after resuming his mask, he descended into the saloon, accompanied by his grand chamberlain.

Mirth and gayety reigned; the room was crowded with masks; here stood a group in gay conversation; there was dancing at the other end of the saloon. Some were listening to the organ-player, as he sang, in comical German and French verses, little incidents and adventures that had occurred during the present year at court, bringing forth laughter, confused silence, and blushes. Some were amusing themselves with the lively, witty chat of the son of the Prince of Prussia, the little ten-year-old, Prince Frederick William. He was dressed as the God of Love, with bow and quiver, dancing around, and, with an early-ripened instinct, directing his arrow at the most beautiful and fascinating ladies in the room.

Prince Henry paid no attention to all this; his wandering glance sought only the beautiful Louise, and a deep sigh escaped him at not having found her. Hastily he stepped through the rows of dancers which separated the two cavaliers from him.

"It appears," murmured Baron Kalkreuth to his friend, "it appears to me that the prince would like to get rid of us. He wishes to be entirely unobserved. I think we can profit by this, and therefore I shall take leave of you for a while, and seek my own adventures."

"I advise you," murmured Baron Kaphengst, laughingly, "to appoint no rendezvous for to-morrow."

"And why not, friend?"

"Because you will not be able to appear; for you will doubtless be in arrest."

"That is true, and I thank you for your prudent advice, and shall arrange all my rendezvous for the day after to-morrow. Farewell."

Baron Kaphengst turned laughingly to another part of the saloon. Suddenly he felt a hand placed on his shoulder, and a low voice murmured his name.

Terrified, he turned. "I am not the one you seek, mask," he said; but as he met those two large, burning eyes, he shuddered, and even his bold, daring heart stood still a moment from terror. Only the king had such eyes; only he had such a commanding glance.

"You say you are not the one I seek," said the mask. "Well, yes, you speak wisely. I sought in you a brave and obedient officer, and it appears that you are not that. You are not, then, Lieutenant von Kaphengst?"

Kaphengst thought a moment. He was convinced it was the king that spoke with him, for Frederick had not attempted to dis-

guise his voice. Kaphengst knew he was discovered. There remained nothing for him but to try and reconcile the king by a jest.

He bowed close to the king, and whispered: "Listen, mask—as you have recognized me, I will acknowledge the truth. Yes, I am Lieutenant von Kaphengst, and am incognito. You understand me—I came to this ball incognito. He is a scoundrel who repeats it!" and, without awaiting an answer, he hastened away to seek the prince and Baron Kalkreuth, acquaint them with the king's presence, and fly with them from his anger.

But Prince Henry, whose fruitless search for his sweetheart had made him angry and defiant, declared he would remain at the ball until it was over, and that it should be optional with the king to insult his brother openly, and to punish and humble a prince of his house before the world.

"I, unfortunately, do not belong to the princes of the royal house, and I therefore fear that the king might regard me as the cat who had to pull the hot chestnuts from the ashes, and I might suffer for all three. I therefore pray your highness to allow me to withdraw."

"You may go, and if you meet Kalkreuth, ask him to accompany you. You officers must not carry your insubordination any further. I, as prince, and Hohenzollern, dare the worst, but, be assured, I shall pay for my presumption. Farewell, and hasten! Do not forget Kalkreuth."

Kaphengst sought in vain. Kalkreuth was nowhere to be found, and he had to wend his way alone to Potsdam.

"I shall take care not to await the order of the king for my arrest," said Baron Kaphengst to himself, as he rode down the road to Potsdam. "I shall be in arrest when his order arrives. Perhaps that will soften his anger."

Accordingly, when Kaphengst arrived at the court guard, in Potsdam, he assumed the character of a drunken, quarrelsome officer, and played his *rôle* so well that the commander placed him in arrest.

An hour later the king's order reached the commander to arrest Baron Kaphengst, and with smiling astonishment he received the answer that he had been under arrest for the last hour.

In the mean time, Kaphengst had not miscalculated. The prince was put under arrest for eight days, Kalkreuth for three. He was released the next morning, early enough to appear at the parade.

As the king, with his generals, rode down to the front, he immediately noticed the audacious young officer, whose eye met his askance and pleadingly. The king beckoned to him, and as Baron Kaphengst stood erect before him, the king said, laughingly:

"It is truly difficult to exchange secrets with one of your height; bow down to me, I have something to whisper in you ear."

The comrades and officers, yes, even the generals, saw not without envy that the king was so gracious to the young Lieutenant von Kaphengst; whispered a few words to him confidentially, and then smiling and bowing graciously, moved on.

It was, therefore, natural that, when the king left, all were anxious to congratulate the young lieutenant, and ask him what the king had whispered. But Baron Kaphengst avoided, with dignified gravity, all inquiries, and only whispered to his commander softly, but loud enough for every one to hear, the words, "State secrets;" then bowing profoundly, returned with an earnest and grave face to his dwelling, there to meditate at his leisure upon the king's words —words both gracious and cruel, announcing his advancement, but at the same time condemning him to secrecy.

The king's words were: "You are a captain, but he is a scoundrel who repeats it!"

Thus Baron Kaphengst was captain, but no one suspected it; the captain remained a simple lieutenant in the eyes of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEGACY OF VON TRENCK, COLONEL OF THE PANDOURS.

Baron Weingarten, the new secretary of legation of the Austrian embassy in Berlin, paced the ambassador's office in great displeasure. It was the hour in which all who had affairs to arrange with the Austrian ambassador, passports to *visé*, contracts to sign, were allowed entrance, and it was the baron's duty to receive them. But no one came; no one desired to make use of his ability or his mediation, and this displeased the baron and put him out of humor. It was not the want of work and activity that annoyed him; the baron would have welcomed the *dolce far niente* had it not been unfortunately connected with his earnings; the fees he received for passports, and the arrangement of other affairs, formed part of his salary as secretary of legation, and as he possessed no fortune, this was his only resource. This indigence alone led him to resign his aristocratic independence and freedom of action. He had not entered the state service from ambition, but for money, that he might have the means of supporting his mother and unmarried sisters, and enable himself to live according to his rank and old aristocratic name. Baron Weingarten would have made any sacrifice, submitted to any service, to obtain wealth. Poverty had demoral-

ized him, pride had laid a mildew on his heart and stifled all noble aspirations. As he read a letter, just received from his mother, complaining of wants and privations, telling of the attachment of a young officer to his sister, and that poverty alone prevented their marriage, his heart was filled with repining, and at this moment he was prepared to commit a crime, if, by so doing, he could have obtained wealth.

In this despairing and sorrowful mood he had entered the office, and awaited in vain for petitioners who would pay him richly for his services. But the hours passed in undisturbed quiet, and Baron Weingarten was in the act of leaving the office, as the servant announced Baron von Waltz, and the court councillor, Zetto, from Vienna.

He advanced to meet the two gentlemen, with a smiling countenance, and welcomed his Austrian countrymen heartily.

The two gentlemen seated themselves silently; Weingarten took a seat in front of them.

A painful, embarrassed pause ensued. The majestic Baron von Waltz looked silently at the ceiling, while the black, piercing eyes of the little Councillor Zetto examined the countenance of Weingarten with a strangely searching and penetrating expression.

"You are from Vienna?" said Weingarten at last, puting an end to this painful silence.

"We are from Vienna," answered the baron, with a grave bow.

"And have travelled here post-haste to have an interview with you."

"With me?" asked the secretary of legation, astonished.

"With you alone," said the baron, gravely.

"We wish you to do the King of Prussia a great service," said Zetto, solemnly.

Weingarten reddened, and said confusedly: "The King of Prussia! You forget, gentlemen, that my services belong alone to the Empress Maria Theresa."

"He defends himself before he is accused," said Zetto, aside. "It is then true, as we have been told, he is playing a double game —serves Austria and Prussia at the same time." Turning to Baron Weingarten, he said: "That which we ask of you will be at the same time a service to our gracious empress, for certainly it would not only distress, but compromise her majesty, if an Austrian officer committed a murder in Prussia."

"Murder!" cried the secretary of legation.

"Yes, an intentional murder," said Baron Waltz, emphatically —"the murder of the King of Prussia. If you prevent this crime, you will receive ten thousand guilders," said Zetto, examining

Weingarten's countenance closely. He remarked that the baron, who was but a moment ago pale from terror, now reddened, and that his eyes sparkled joyously.

"And what can I do to prevent this murder?" asked Weingarten, hastily.

"You can warn the king."

"But to warn successfully, I must have proofs."

"We are ready to give the most incontrovertible proofs."

"I must, before acting, be convinced of the veracity of your charges."

"I hope that my word of honor will convince you of their truth," said Baron Waltz, pathetically.

Weingarten bowed, with an ambiguous smile, that did not escape Zetto. He drew forth his pocket-book, and took from it a small, folded paper, which he handed to Weingarten.

"If I strengthen my declaration with this paper, will you trust me?"

Weingarten looked with joyful astonishment at the paper; it was a check for two thousand guilders. "My sister's dowry," thought Weingarten, with joy. But the next moment came doubt and suspicion. What if they were only trying him—only convincing themselves if he could be bought? Perhaps he was suspected of supplying the Prussian Government from time to time with Austrian news—of communicating to them the contents of important dispatches!

The fire faded from his eye, and with a firm countenance he laid the paper upon the table.

"Your are mistaken, gentlemen! that is no document, but a check."

"With which many documents could be purchased," said Zetto, smiling. Placing the paper again in his pocket-book, he took out another and a larger one. It was a check for three thousand guilders.

But Weingarten had regained his composure. He knew that men acting thus must be spies or criminals; that they were testing him, or luring him on to some unworthy act. In either case, he must be on his guard.

"I beg you to confirm your charge in the usual manner," said he, with a cold, indifferent glance at the paper. "Murder is a dreadful accusation—you cannot act too carefully. You say that an Austrian officer intends to murder the King of Prussia. How do you know this?"

"From himself," said Baron Waltz; "he communicated his intentions to me, and confided to me his entire plan."

"It appears," remarked Weingarten, mockingly, "that the officer had reason to believe he might trust you with this terrible secret."

"You see, however, that he was mistaken," said the baron, smilingly. "I demand of you to warn the King of Prussia of the danger that threatens him."

"I shall be compelled to make this danger clear, give all particulars, or the king will laugh at my story and consider it a fairy tale."

"You shall give him convincing proof. Say to him that the murder is to be committed when his majesty attends the Austrian review at Königsberg."

"How will the officer cross the Prussian border?"

"He is supplied with an Austrian passport, and under the pretence of inheriting a large property in Prussia, he has obtained leave of absence for a month."

"There remains now but one question: why does the officer wish to murder the king? what motive leads him to do so?"

"Revenge," said Baron von Waltz, solemnly—"an act of vengeance. This Austrian officer who is resolved to murder the king of Prussia, is Frederick von Trenck."

Weingarten was embarrassed, and his countenance bore an uneasy and troubled expression. But as his eye fell upon the weighty paper that lay before him, he smiled, and looked resolved.

"Now I have but one thing more to ask. Why, if your story is authentic, and well calculated to startle even the brave king, have you thought it necessary to remove my doubts with this document?"

Baron Waltz was silent, and looked inquiringly at Zetto.

"Why did I hand you this document?" said the councillor, with a sweet smile; "because gold remains gold, whether received from an Austrian councillor or from a Prussian prince."

"Sir, do you dare to insult me?" cried the secretary of legation, fiercely.

Zetto smiled. "No, I only wish to notify you that we are aware that it is through you that Baron von Trenck receives money from a certain aristocratic lady in Berlin. It is, therefore, most important that the king should be warned by you of his intended murder —otherwise you might be thought an accomplice."

Weingarten appeared not to be in the least disconcerted by this statement—he seemed not even to have heard it.

"Before I warn the king," he said, with calm composure, "I must be convinced of the truth of the story myself, and I acknowledge to you that I am not convinced. cannot understand your motives for seeking the destruction of Baron von Trenck."

"Ah! you search into our motives—you mistrust us," cried Zetto,

hastily. "Well, we will prove to you that we trust you, by telling you our secret. You know the story of the inheritance of Trenck?"

"He is the only heir of the pandour chieftain, Franz von Trenck."

"Correct. And do you know the history of this pandour chieftain Trenck?"

"I have heard a confused and uncertain statement, but nothing definite or reliable."

"It is, however, a very interesting and instructive story, and shows how far a man with a determined will and great energy can reach, when his thoughts are directed to one end. Baron Trenck wished to be rich, immensely rich—that was the aim of his life. Seduced by his love of money, he became the captain of a band of robbers, then a murderer, a church-robber; from that a brave soldier, and, at last, a holy penitent. Robbing and plundering everywhere, he succeeded in collecting millions. The pandour chieftain Trenck soon became so rich, that he excited the envy of the noblest and wealthiest men in the kingdom, so rich that he was able to lend large sums of money to the powerful and influential Baron Lowenwalde. You see, baron, it only needs a determined will to become rich."

"Oh! the foolish man," said Weingarten, shrugging his shoulders; "lending money to a noble and powerful man, is making an irreconcilable enemy."

"You speak like a prophet. It happened, as you say. Lowenwalde became Trenck's enemy. He accused him of embezzling the imperial money, of treachery and faithlessness—and Trenck was imprisoned."

"His millions obtained his release, did they not?"

"No. His riches reduced him to greater misery. His lands were sequestered, and a body of commissioners were selected to attend to them. Baron Waltz and myself belonged to this commission."

"Ah! I begin to understand," murmured Weingarten.

Baron Zetto continued, with a smile: "The commissioners made the discovery that report had greatly exaggerated the riches of Trenck. He had not many treasures, but many debts. In order to liquidate those debts, we desired his creditors to announce themselves every day, and promised them a daily ducat until the end of the process."

"I hope you two gentlemen were among his creditors," said Weingarten.

"Certainly, we were, and also Baron Marken."

"Therefore you have a threefold advantage from Trenck's im-

prisonment. first, your salary as a member of the commission; secondly, as a creditor——"

"And thirdly—you spoke of a threefold advantage?"

"And thirdly," said Weingarten, laughing, "in searching for the missing treasures of Baron Trenck which had disappeared so unfortunately."

"Ah, sir, you speak like those who suspected us at court, and wished to make the empress believe that we had enriched ourselves as commissioners. Soon after this Trenck died, and Frederick von Trenck hastened from St. Petersburg to receive his inheritance. How great was his astonishment to find instead of the hoped-for millions a few mortgaged lands, an income of a hundred thousand guilders, and sixty-three creditors who claimed the property."

"He should have become one of the commissioners," remarked Weingarten, mockingly. "Perhaps it would have then been easier for him to obtain his possessions."

"He attempted it in another way, with the aid of money, bribery, and persuasion. He has already succeeded in obtaining fifty-four of his sixty-three processes, and will win the others in a few days."

"And then he will doubtless cause the commissioners to give in their accounts, and close their books."

"Exactly. He has already commenced to do so. He ordered an investigation to be made against the quartermaster, and the commander of the regiment to which Franz von Trenck belonged. This man had accused Trenck of having embezzled eight thousand of the imperial money, and Trenck succeeded so far, that it was declared that it was not he, but his accusers, who had committed the crime. The consequence was, that the quartermaster was deposed; and it would have fared as badly with the commander, had he not found powerful protection."

"And now the dangerous Frederick von Trenck will seize the property of the commissioners."

"He would do so if we did not know how to prevent him. We must employ every means to remove him, and, believe me, we are not the only men who wish for his disappearance. A large and powerful party have the same desire, and would joyfully pay ten thousand guilders to be freed from his investigations."

Weingarten's eyes sparkled for a moment, and his heart beat quickly; but he suppressed these joyful emotions, and retained his calm and indifferent expression.

"Gentlemen," he said, quietly, "as you are speaking of a real criminal, one who intends committing so great a crime, I am at your service, and no money or promises are necessary to buy my assistance."

"Is he really a man of honor, and have we received false information?" thought Zetto, who was misled for a moment by the quiet and virtuous looks of the secretary of legation.

"In the mean while you will not prevent those for whom you are about to do a great service from showing their gratitude," said Baron Waltz. "Every one has a right to give or to receive a present."

"Gentlemen," said Baron Weingarten, smilingly, "no one has spoken of a present, but of a payment, a bribery, and you can readily understand that this is insulting to a man of honor."

"Ah, he leaves open a door of escape," thought Zetto. "He is won, he can be bought.—You are right, baron," he said aloud, "and we are wrong to offer you now that which hereafter will be a debt of gratitude. We will speak no more of this, but of the danger that threatens the king. You alone can save him by warning him of his danger."

"You really believe, then, that Trenck has the intention of murdering the king?" said Weingarten.

"We *will* believe it," said Zetto, with an ambiguous smile.

"We must believe it!" cried Baron Waltz, emphatically. "We must either believe in his murderous intentions, or be ourselves regarded as traitors and robbers. You will think it natural that we prefer the first alternative, and as he resolved to ruin us, we will anticipate him, and set the trap into which he must fall."

"Why could you not lay your snares in Austria, gentlemen? Why could you not accuse him of intending to murder the empress?"

Zetto shrugged his shoulders. "That would not be credible, because Trenck has no motive for murdering Maria Theresa, while he might very well thirst to revenge himself upon Frederick. You know that the king and Trenck are personal enemies. Trenck has boasted of this enmity often and loud enough to be understood by the whole world, and I do not believe that this animosity has diminished. Enemies naturally desire to destroy each other. Trenck would succeed if we did not warn the king, and enable him to anticipate his enemy."

"How can this be done? Will the king really go to Königsberg to be present at the Austrian festivities?"

"It has been spoken of."

"Well, Trenck now proposes to go to Dantzic, and he has boasted that he will enter Königsberg at the same time with the King of Prussia, who will not dare to arrest him."

"We have made a bet with him of a hundred louis d'or on this boast," said Baron Waltz, "and for greater security we have put it in writing."

"Have you it with you?"

"Here it is."

The baron handed Weingarten a paper, which he seized hastily, unfolded, and read several times.

"This is indeed written in very ambiguous language, and calculated to ruin Trenck should it reach the hands of the king," said Baron Weingarten with a cruel smile.

Zetto returned this smile. "I wrote the document, and you will naturally understand that I measured the words very closely."

"Who copied the letter?" asked Weingarten. "Doubtlessly Baron Trenck was not magnanimous enough to do that."

"Baron Waltz is a great adept in imitating handwriting, and he happily possessed original letters of Trenck's," said Zetto, smilingly.

"You will find it most natural that I should try to win my bet," said Baron Waltz. "If Trenck is arrested before he goes to Königsberg, I have won my bet, and will receive the hundred louis d'ors from the commissioners."

All three laughed.

"These commissioners will soon have to pay you ten thousand guilders," whispered Zetto. "Here is a bond. On the day that Trenck is a prisoner of the king of Prussia, this bond is due, and you will then find that the commissioners are not backward in paying." Zetto laid the document upon the table. "You will now have the kindness to receive our testimony, and, if you desire it, we will add our accusations, or you can mention that this can be done."

Weingarten did not answer; a repentant fear tormented his heart, and for a moment it appeared as if his good and evil genius were struggling for his soul.

"This involves probably the life of a man," he said, softly; "it is a terrible accusation that I must pronounce: if not condemned to death, the king will imprison him for many long years, and I shall be responsible for this injustice."

Councillor Zetto's attentive ear heard every word; he stood near him like the evil one, and his piercing eyes rested upon the agitated countenance of Weingarten and read his thoughts.

"Have you not lived the life of a prisoner for many years?" asked Zetto, in a low, unnatural voice; "have you not always been a slave of poverty? Will you now, from weak pity, lose the opportunity of freeing yourself from this bondage? Ten thousand guilders is no fortune, but it may be the beginning of one—it may be the thread of Ariadne to lead you from the labyrinth of poverty to freedom and light; and who will thank you if you do not seize this thread—who recompense you for your generosity and magnanimity? If you tell

it to the wise and cunning, they will laugh at you; and if the foolish hear it, they will not understand you. Every one is the moulder of his own happiness; and woe unto him who neglects to forge the iron while it is hot!"

Baron Weingarten felt each of these words. He did not know if they were uttered by human lips, or if they came from the depths of his own base soul.

"It is true, it is true!" he cried, in a frightened voice; "he is a fool who does not seize the hand of Fortune when tendered by the laughing goddess—a fool who does not break his fetters when he has the power to rend them. Come, gentlemen! we take the testimony, and when that is done, I will conduct you to our ambassador, Baron Puebla."

"Not so—when that is done, we shall depart with post-haste; you alone shall receive thanks and recompense. Now to work!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING AND WEINGARTEN.

THE king paced his room hastily; he was very pale, his lip trembled, and his eyes sparkled angrily.

He suddenly remained standing before the Austrian secretary of legation, and gazed long and earnestly into his face; but his glance, before which so many had trembled, was sustained by the secretary with so quiet and innocent a countenance that it deceived even the king.

"I see that you are convinced of the truth of what you tell me," the king said at last; "you really believe that this madman has the intention of murdering me?"

"I am convinced of it, sire," replied Weingarten, humbly, "for I have the proof of his intention in my hand."

"The proof—what proof?"

"This paper which I allowed myself to hand to your majesty, and which you laid upon the table without reading."

"Ah, it is true! I forgot that in my excitement," said the king, mildly. "I beg you to read me the contents of this paper."

Baron Weingarten received the paper from the king with a respectful bow; his voice did not tremble in the least as he read the important words which refined malice and cruel avarice had written there—words which, if literally interpreted, would fully condemn Trenck.

The words were:

"'In consequence of a bet, I pledge myself to be in Königsberg the same day in which the King Frederick of Prussia, my cruel enemy and persecutor, shall arrive there. I shall go there to do, in the king's presence, that which no one has done before me, and which no one will do after me. If I do not succeed in accomplishing my purpose, or if I should be arrested, I have lost my bet, and shall owe Baron Waltz one hundred louis d'or, which must be paid him by the commissioners of the Trenck estate.

"'Baron Frederick von Trenck.'"

"And Trenck wrote this note himself?" said the king.

"If your majesty is acquainted with Trenck's handwriting, you will perhaps have the goodness to examine it yourself."

"I know his handwriting; give me the paper."

He took the paper and glanced over it searchingly. "It is his handwriting," he murmured; "but I will examine it again."

Speaking thus, he stepped hastily to his *escritoire*, and took from a small box several closely written yellow papers, and compared them with the document which Weingarten had given him.

Ah, how little did Trenck dream, as he wrote those letters, that they would witness against him, and stamp him as a criminal! They were already a crime in the king's eyes, for they were tender letters that Trenck had dared to write from Vienna to the Princess Amelia. They had never reached her!

And not those tender epistles of a tearful and unhappy love must bear witness against the writer, and condemn him for the second time!

"It is his handwriting," said the king, as he laid the letters again in the box. "I thank you, Baron Weingarten; you have saved me from a disagreeable occurrence; for, if I will not even believe that Trenck intended murder, he was at all events willing to create a scene, if only to gratify his vanity. It appears that he has now played out his *rôle* at Vienna, as well as in St. Petersburg and Berlin; and the world would forget him if he did not attract its attention by some mad piece of folly. How he intended to accomplish this I do not know; but certainly not by a murder—no, I cannot believe that!"

"Your majesty is always noble and magnanimous, but it appears to me that these words can have but one meaning. 'I shall go to Königsberg,' writes Baron Trenck, 'and there do in the presence of the king what no one has done before me, and what no one will do after me.' Does not this make his intention pretty clear?"

"Only for those who know his intentions or suspect them, for others they could have any other signification; some romantic threat, nothing more. Baron Trenck is a known adventurer, a species

of Don Quixote, always fighting against windmills, and believing that warriors and kings honor him so far as to be his enemies. I punished Trenck when he was in my service, for insubordination; now he is no longer in my service, and I have forgotten him, but woe be unto him if he forces me to remember him!"

"Your majesty will soon see if he is falsely accused. These reliable and irreproachable men came especially to warn your majesty, through me. You will discover if they have calumniated Trenck, by giving this testimony. If he does not go to Dantzic, does not enter Prussia, they have sworn falsely, and Trenck is innocent."

"He will not dare to cross the borders of my state, for he knows he will be court-martialled as a deserter. But I am convinced that he is a bold adventurer; he has boasted that he will defy me; that is certainly what no one has done before him, and what no one will do after him; but it will rest there, you may believe me."

Baron Weingarten bowed silently. The king continued, with an engaging smile:

"However, monsieur, I owe you many thanks, and it would please me to have an opportunity of rewarding you."

Until this moment, Weingarten had been standing with bowed head; he now stood erect, and his eye dared to meet that of the king.

"Sire," he said, with the noble expression of offended innocence, "I demand and wish no other reward than that you may profit by my warning. If the fearful danger that threatens your majesty is averted through me, that will be my all-sufficient recompense. I must decline any other."

The king smiled approvingly. "You speak emphatically, and it appears that you really believe in this danger. Well, I thank you only as that is your desire. I will respect your warning and guard myself from the danger that you believe threatens me; but to do that, and at the same time to convince ourselves of Trenck's evil intentions, we must observe the most perfect silence in this whole affair, and you must promise me to speak of it to no one."

"Sire, secrecy appeared to me so necessary, that I did not even communicate it to Baron Puebla, but came to your majesty on my own responsibility."

"You did well, for now Trenck will fall unwarned into the trap we set for him. Be silent, therefore, upon the subject. If you should ever have a favor to ask, come to me with this *tabatière* in your hand. I will remember this hour, and if it is in my power will grant you what you wish."

He handed Weingarten his gold, diamond-studded *tabatière*, and received his thanks with approving smiles.

After he had dismissed the secretary of legation, and was alone, the smile faded from his face, and his countenance was sad and disturbed.

"It has come to this," he said, as he paced his room, with his hands folded behind his back. "This man, whom I once loved so warmly, wishes to murder me. Ah! ye proud princes, who imagine yourselves gods on earth, you are not even safe from a murderer's dagger, and you are as vulnerable as the commonest beggar. Why does he wish my death? Were I a fantastic, romantic hero, I might say he hoped to claim his sweetheart over my dead body! But Amelia is no longer a person for whom a man would risk his life; she is but a faint and sad resemblance of the past—her rare beauty is tear-stained and turned to ashes, but her heart still lives; it is young and warm, and belongs to Trenck! And shall I dissipate this last illusion? Must she now learn that he to whom she sacrificed so much is but a common murderer? No, I will spare her this sorrow! I will not give Trenck the opportunity to fulfil his work; even his intention shall remain doubtful. I shall not go to Königsberg; and if, in his presumptuous thirst for notoriety or for vengeance, he should enter Prussia, he shall be cared for—he shall not escape his punishment. Let him but try to cross my borders—he will find a snare spread, a cage from which he cannot escape. Yes, so it shall be. But neither the world nor Trenck shall suspect why this is done. If my brothers and envious persons hold him up in future as an example of my hardness of heart, what do I care for their approval, or the praise of short-sighted men! I do my duty, and am answerable only to God and myself. Trenck intends to murder me—I must preserve myself for my people. My mission is not yet accomplished; and if a poisonous insect crosses my path, I must crush it."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNWILLING BRIDEGROOM.

PRINCE HENRY had again passed eight days in arrest—eight tedious days, days of powerless anger and painful humiliation. This arrest had been, by the king's express orders, so strict, that no one was allowed to see the prince but Pöllnitz, who belonged, as the king said, to the inventory of the house of Hohenzollern, and, therefore, all doors were open to him.

Pöllnitz alone had, therefore, the pleasure of hearing the complaints and reproaches, and bitter accusations of the prince against his brother. Pöllnitz always had an attentive ear for these com-

plaints; and after listening to the prince with every appearance of real feeling and warm sympathy, he would hasten to the king, and with drooping eyelids and rejoicing heart repeat the bitter and hateful words of the unsuspicious prince—words that were well calculated to increase the king's displeasure. The prince still declared that he would not marry, and the king insisted that he must submit to his will and commands.

Thus the eight days had passed, and Pöllnitz came to-day with the joyful news that his arrest was at an end, and he was now free.

"That means," said the prince, bitterly, "that I am free to wander through the stupid streets of Potsdam; appear at his table; that my clothes may be soiled by his unbearable four-legged friends, and my ears deafened by the dull, pedantic conversation of his no less unbearable two-legged friends."

"Your highness can save yourself from all these small annoyances," said Pöllnitz; "you have only to marry."

"Marry, bah! That means to give my poor sister-in-law, Elizabeth Christine, a companion, that they may sing their sorrows to each other. No, I have not the bravery of my kingly brother, to make a feeling, human being unhappy in order to satisfy state politics. No, I possess not the egotism to purchase my freedom with the life-long misery of another."

"But, *mon Dieu!* my prince," said Pöllnitz, in his cynical way, "you look at it in too virtuous a manner. All women are not as good and pure as poor Elizabeth Christine, and know how to compensate themselves in other quarters for the indifference of their husbands. We are not speaking here of a common marriage, but of the betrothal of a prince. You do not marry your heart, but your hand. Truly such a marriage-ceremony is a protecting talisman, that may be held up to other women as an iron shield upon which all their egotistical wishes, all their extravagant demands must rebound. Moreover, a married man is entirely *sans conséquence* for all unmarried women, and if they should love such a one, the happy mortal may be convinced that his love is really a caprice of the heart, and not a selfish calculation or desire to marry."

The prince regarded the smiling courtier earnestly, almost angrily. "Do you know," he said, "that what you say appears to me very immoral?"

"Immoral?" asked Pöllnitz, astonished; "what is that? Your princely highness knows that I received my education at the French court, under the protection of the Regent of Orleans and the Princess of the Palatinate, and there I never heard this word *immoral*. Perhaps your highness will have the kindness to explain it to me."

"That would be preaching to deaf ears," said the prince, shrug-

ging his shoulders. "We will not quarrel about the meaning of a word. I only wish to make you understand that I would not marry at my brother's *bon plaisir*. I will not continue this race of miserable princes, that are entirely useless, and consequently a burden to the state Oh! if Heaven would only give me the opportunity to distinguish myself before this people, and give to this name that is so small, so unworthy, a splendor, a color, a signification!"

"Your highness is ambitous," said Pöllnitz, as the prince, now silent, paced his room with deep emotion.

"Yes, I am ambitious—I thirst for action, renown, and activity. I despise this monotonous, colorless existence, without end or aim. My God! how happy I should be, if, instead of a prince, I could be a simple private man, proprietor of a small landed estate, with a few hundred subjects, that I should endeavor to make happy! But I am nothing but a king's brother, have nothing but my empty title and the star upon my coat. My income is so small, so pitiful, that it would scarcely suffice to pay the few servants I have, if, at the same time, they were not paid by the king as his spies."

"But all this will cease as soon as you speak the decisive word; as soon as you declare yourself prepared to marry."

"And you dare to tell me this?" cried the prince, with flashing eyes--"you, that know I love a lady who is unfortunately no princess, or do you believe that a miserable prince has not the heart of a man—that he does not possess the ardent desire, the painful longing for the woman he loves?"

"Oh, women do not deserve that we should love them so ardently; they are all fickle and inconstant, believe me, my prince."

The prince cast a quick, questioning glance at the smiling countenance of the courtier.

"Why do you say this to me?" he asked, anxiously.

"Because I am convinced of its truth, your highness; because I believe no woman has the power to preserve her love when obstacles are placed in the way, or that she can be faithful for the short space of eight days, if her lover is absent."

The prince was startled, and looked terrified at Pöllnitz.

"Eight days," he murmured; "it is eight days—no, it is twelve since I saw Louise."

"Ah, twelve days!—and your highness has the really heroic belief that she still loves you?"

The prince sighed, and his brow clouded, but only for a few moments, and his countenance was again bright and his eyes sparkled.

"Yes, I have this belief; and why should I not have it, as my own heart had stood the trial? I have not seen her for twelve days, have not heard of her, and still my love is as great and as ardent as

ever. Yes, I believe that at the thought of her my heart beats more quickly, more longingly than if I had her in my arms."

"The reason of this," said Pöllnitz, almost sympathetically, "is that it is your first love."

Prince Henry looked at him angrily

"You are wrong and most unjust to this beautiful woman, who remained good and pure in the midst of the corrupting and terrible circumstances in which destiny placed her. She preserved a chaste heart, an unspotted soul. Her misfortunes only refined her, and therefore I love her, and believe that God has placed me in her way that, after all her sufferings, I might make her happy. Oh, precisely because of her sorrows, the shameful slanders with which she is pursued, and all for which she is reproached, I love her."

"Well, my prince," sighed Pöllnitz, with a tragical expression, "I never saw a bolder hero and a more pious Christian than your highness."

"What do you mean by that, Pöllnitz?"

"That an enormous amount of bravery is necessary, prince, to believe Madame von Kleist chaste and innocent, and that only a pious Christian can count himself so entirely among those of whom Christ says, 'Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.' May a good fairy long preserve you your bravery and your Christianity! But surely your highness must have important and convincing proofs to believe in the innocence and faithfulness of this woman. I confess that any other man would have been discouraged in his godlike belief by facts. It is a fact that for twelve days Madame von Kleist has sent you no message through me; it is a fact that she was not at the masked ball; that as often as I have been to her in these last days, to deliver letters for your highness, and to obtain hers in return, she has never received me, always excused herself; and, therefore, I could not receive her letters, nor deliver those of your highness."

"And were you not in Berlin early this morning? Did you not go to her as I ordered you, and tell her she might expect me this evening?"

"I went to her house, but in vain; she was with the queen-mother, and I was told that she would not return until late in the evening, I therefore could not deliver the message, your highness."

The prince stamped his foot impatiently, and walked hastily to and fro; his brow was clouded, his lips trembled with inward emotion. The sharp eye of the baron followed with an attentive, pitiless glance every movement of his face, noted every sigh that came from his anxious heart, that he might judge whether the seeds of mistrust that he had sown in the breast of the prince would grow.

But Prince Henry was still young, brave, and hopeful; it was his first love they wished to poison, but his young, healthy nature withstood the venom, and vanquished its evil effects. His countenance resumed its quiet, earnest expression, and the cloud disappeared from his brow

"Do you know," he said, standing before Pöllnitz, and looking smilingly into his cunning face—"do you know that you do not descend, as the rest of mankind, from Adam and Eve, but in a direct line from the celebrated serpent? And truly you do honor to your ancestor! No paradise is holy to you, and to do evil gives you pleasure. But you shall not disturb my paradise; and as much of the old Adam as is still in me, I will not be foolish enough to eat of the bitter fruit that you offer me. No, you shall not succeed in making me jealous and distrustful; you shall not destroy my faith: and see you, those that believe are still in paradise, notwithstanding your ancestor, the serpent."

"My prince," said Pöllnitz, shrugging his shoulders, "your highness looks upon me as a kind of Messiah—at least it pleases you to give me a mother and no father. But oh, my prince! if you are right about my descent, philosophers are certainly wrong, for they maintain that the serpent of paradise left gold as a fearful inheritance to mankind. I shall accuse my great-grandmother the serpent of disinheriting me and condemning me to live upon the generosity of my friends and patrons."

He looked at the prince, with a sly, covetous glance, but he had not understood him; engaged in deep thought, he had stepped to the window, and was gazing up at the heavens, where the clouds were chasing each other.

"She will be the entire day with my mother, and I shall not see her," he murmured. Then, turning hastily to Pöllnitz, he asked, "How is the queen-mother? Did I not hear that she was suffering?"

"Certainly, your highness, a severe attack of gout confines her to her chair, and holds her prisoner."

"Poor mother! it is long since I saw you."

"It is true, the queen complained of it the last time I spoke with her," said Pöllnitz, with a perfectly serious face, but with inward rejoicing.

Another pause ensued. The prince appeared to reflect, and to struggle with his own thoughts and wishes. Pöllnitz stood behind him, and noted every motion, every sigh that he uttered, with his malicious smiles.

"I believe," said the prince, with still averted face, perhaps to prevent Pöllnitz from seeing his blushes—"I believe it would be

proper for me to inquire to-day personally after my mother's health; it is not only my duty to do so, but the desire of my heart."

"Her majesty will be pleased to see her beloved son again, and this pleasure will hasten her recovery."

The prince turned hastily and glanced sharply at Pöllnitz, as if he wished to read his inmost thoughts. But the countenance of the courtier was earnest and respectful.

"If that is your opinion," said the prince, with a happy smile, "my duty as a son demands that I should hasten to the queen, and I will go immediately to Berlin. But as I am going to my mother, and solely on her account, I will do it in the proper form. Have, therefore, the kindness to obtain my leave of the king—bring me my brother's answer immediately, I only await it to depart."

"And I hasten to bring it to your highness," said Pöllnitz, withdrawing.

Prince Henry looked thoughtfully after him.

"I shall see her," he murmured; "I shall speak with her, and shall learn why she withdrew herself so long from me. Oh, I know she will be able to justify herself, and these slanders and evil reports will flee before her glance as clouds before the rays of the sun."

In the mean while, Pöllnitz hastened to Sans Souci, where he was immediately received by the king.

"Your majesty," he said, joyfully, "the young lion has fallen into the net that we set for him."

"He goes then to Berlin, to the queen-mother?" asked the king, quickly.

"He begs your majesty's permission to take this little trip."

"He really charged you with this commission?"

"Yes, sire: it appears that his obstinacy is beginning to relent, and that he thinks of submitting."

The king was silent, and walked thoughtfully to and fro, with clouded brow, then remained standing before Pöllnitz, and looked sharply and piercingly at him.

"You rejoice," he said, coldly, "but you only think of your own advantage. You are indifferent to the sorrow we are preparing for my brother. You only think that your debts will be paid. Yes, I will pay them, but I shall never forget that you have betrayed my brother's confidence."

"I only acted according to your majesty's commands," said Pöllnitz, confounded.

"Certainly, but if you had resisted my commands, I would have esteemed and prized you the more. Now, I shall pay your debts, but I shall despise you. No one has reasons for thanking you."

"Sire, I desire no other thanks. Had I been paid with money

for my services, instead of fine speeches, I would have been as rich as Crœsus."

"And a beggar in virtue," said the king, smiling. "But go, I was wrong to reproach you. I shall now go to Berlin, and when my brother arrives he shall find me there. Go now, my grand chamberlain, and take the prince my permission for a three days' absence."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT.

A FEW hours later the equipage of Prince Henry arrived in the court-yard of Monbijou, and the prince demanded of his mother, the widowed queen, permission to pay her his respects.

Sophia Dorothea was suffering greatly. The gout, that slow but fatal disease, which does not kill at once, but limb by limb, had already paralyzed the feet of the poor queen, and confined her to her chair. To-day her sufferings were greater than usual, and she was not able to leave her bed. Therefore, she could not receive the prince as a queen, but only as a mother, without ceremony or etiquette. That the meeting might be entirely without constraint, the maids of honor left the queen's room, and as the prince entered, he saw the ladies disappearing by another door; the last one had just made her farewell bow, and was kissing respectfully the queen's hand.

This was Louise von Kleist, for whose sake the prince had come, and for whom his heart throbbed painfully. He could have cried aloud for joy as he saw her in her bewildering loveliness, her luxuriant beauty. He longed to seize her hands and cover them with kisses—to tell her how much he had suffered, how much he was still suffering for her sake.

But Louise appeared not to have seen him, not to have noticed his entrance. She had only eyes and ears for the queen, who was just dismissing her with winning words, telling her to remain in the castle and return when she desired to see her.

"I shall remain and await your majesty's commands," said Louise, withdrawing hastily.

The queen now greeted the prince as if she had just observed him, and invited him to be seated on the *fauteuil* near her couch.

The prince obeyed, but he was absent-minded and restless, and the more the queen endeavored to engage him in harmless and unconstrained conversation, the more monosyllabic and preoccupied

he became. The poor prince remembered only that his beloved was so near, that only a door separated them, and prevented him from gazing on her beauty.

Yes, Louise was really in the next room, in the cabinet of the queen, sorrowful and exhausted; she had fallen upon the little sofa near the door, the smile had left her lips, and her brilliant, bewitching eyes were filled with tears. Louise wept; she wept for her last youthful dream, her last hope of happiness and virtue, for her sad, shadowed future and wounded pride; for to-day she had to resign forever the proud hopes, the brilliant future for which she had striven with so much energy.

But it was vain to struggle against this hard necessity. The king had given her his orders and was there to see them carried out. He sat behind that *portière* that led into the grand saloon; he had just left Louise, and, before going, had said to her, in a stern, commanding tone:

"You will fulfil my commands accurately. You know that Fritz Wendel still lives, and that I shall be inexorable if you do not act as you have promised."

Louise submitted respectfully to the king's commands; she accepted her fate, but she wept bitterly, and when she felt that the king's eyes were no longer upon her, her tears flowed unceasingly.

Perhaps Frederick still saw her, or suspected her weakness, for the *portière* opened slightly, and his noble, but stern countenance appeared.

"Madame," he said, "if the prince sees you with tearful eyes, he will not believe in your happiness."

Louise smiled painfully. "Ah! sire, he will believe I am weeping for joy. I have often heard of joyful tears."

The king did not reply; he felt for her agony, and closed the *portière*.

"I will cry no more," she said; "I have accepted my destiny, and will fulfil it bravely for the sake of my daughter. It concerns Camilla's happiness more than my own. I will deserve the respect of my unfortunate child."

In saying this, a smile like a sunbeam illuminated her countenance. But now she started up, and laid her hand in terror upon her heart. She heard steps approaching. The door moved, and in a moment the king appeared and motioned to her.

"Courage, courage!" murmured Louise, and with instinctive fear she flew away from the door and placed herself in the niche of the last window.

To reach her, the prince must cross the saloon; that would give her a few moments to recover. The door opened and Prince Henry

entered; his glance flew quickly over the saloon, and found the one he sought.

Louise could have shrieked with agony when she saw the tender smile with which he greeted her. Never had he appeared so handsome, so noble as at this moment, when she must resign him forever.

But there was no time to think of this, no time for complaints or regrets. He was there, he stood before her, offered both his hands, and greeted her with the tenderest words of love.

Louise had a stern part to play, and she dared not listen to her heart's pleadings.

"Ah, my prince," she said, with a laugh that sounded to herself like the wail of a lost soul—"ah, my prince, take care! we women are very credulous, and I might take your jesting words for truth."

"I advise you to do so," said the prince, happy and unconcerned. "Yes, Louise, I advise you to do so, for you know well that my jesting words have an earnest meaning. And now that we are alone, we will dispense with ceremony. You must justify yourself before a lover—a lover who is unfortunately very jealous. Yes, yes, Louise, that is my weakness; I do not deny it, I am jealous—jealous of all those who keep you from me, who prevent my receiving your letters."

"My letters!" said Louise, astonished; "why should I have written letters to your highness? I do not believe it is the custom for ladies to write to gentlemen voluntarily. It has been two weeks since I received a letter from your highness."

"Because it was impossible for my messenger to deliver them, Louise; you were so unapproachable, at least for me. But you must have known that my thoughts were always with you, that my heart pined for news and comfort from you."

"*Non, vraiment*, I did not know it," said Louise, laughingly.

"You did not know it?" asked Henry, wonderingly. "Well, what did you suppose?"

"I thought," she said, carelessly—"I thought that Prince Henry had overcome or forgotten his little folly of the carnival."

"And then?"

"Then I determined to follow his example. Then I preached a long sermon to my foolish eyes—they were misty with tears. Listen, I said to them: 'You foolish things you have no reason to weep; you should always look bright and dazzling, even if you never see Prince Henry again. Really, the absence of the prince has been most fortunate for you. You might have whispered all kinds of foolish things to my weak heart. The prince is young, handsome, and amiable, and it amuses him to win the love of fair ladies. Had you seen him more frequently, it is possible he might have succeeded

with poor Louise, and the little flirtation we carried on together would have resulted in earnest love on my part. That would have been a great misfortune. Laugh and look joyous, beautiful eyes, you have saved me from an unrequited love. You should not weep, but rejoice. Look around and find another suitor, who would, perhaps, love me so fondly that he could not forget me in a few days; whose love I might return with ardor.' This, my prince, is the sermon I preached to my eyes when they grew dim with tears."

"And was your sermon effective?" said the prince, with pale, trembling lips. "Did your eyes, those obedient slaves, look around and find another lover?"

"Ah! your highness, how can you doubt it? My eyes are indeed my slaves, and must obey. Yes, they looked and found the happiness they sought."

"What happiness," asked Henry, apparently quite tranquil, but he pressed his hand nervously on the chair that stood by him—"what happiness did your eyes find?"

Louise looked at him and sighed deeply. "The happiness," she said, and against her will her voice trembled and faltered—"the happiness that a true, earnest love alone can give—which I have received joyously into my heart as a gift from God."

The prince laughed aloud, but his face had a wild, despairing expression, and his hands clasped the chair more firmly.

"I do not understand your holy, pious words. What do they mean? What do you wish to say?"

"They mean that I now love so truly and so earnestly that I have promised to become the wife of the man I love," said Louise, with forced gayety.

The prince uttered a wild cry, and raised his hands as if to curse the one who had wounded him so painfully.

"If this is true," he said, in a deep, hollow voice—"if this is true, I despise, I hate you, and they are right who call you a heartless coquette."

"Ah, my prince, you insult me," cried Louise.

"I insult you!" he said, with a wild laugh; "verily, I believe this woman has the effrontery to reproach me—I who believed in and defended her against every accusation—I that had the courage to love and trust, when all others distrusted and despised her. Yes, madame, I loved you; I saw in you a goddess, where others saw only a coquette. I adored you as an innocent sacrifice to envy and malice; I saw a martyr's crown upon your brow, and wished to change it for the myrtle-crown of marriage. And my love and hopes are dust and ashes; it is enough to drive me mad—enough to stifle me with rage and shame."

Carried away by passion, the prince ran wildly through the saloon, gasping for air, struggling for composure, and now and then uttering words of imprecation and despair.

Louisea waited, in silence and resignation, the end of this stormy crisis. She questioned her heart if this bitter hour was not sufficient atonement for all her faults and follies; if the agony she now suffered did not wipe out and extirpate the past.

The prince still paced the room violently. Suddenly, as if a new thought had seized him, he remained standing in the middle of the saloon, and looked at Louise with a strangely altered countenance. She had forgotten for a moment the part she was condemned to play, and leaned, pale and sad, against the window.

Perhaps he heard her sorrowful sighs—perhaps he saw her tears as they rolled one by one from her eyes, and fell like pearls upon her small white hands.

Anger disappeared from his face, his brow cleared, and as he approached Louise his eyes sparkled with another and milder fire.

"Louise," he said, softly, and his voice, which had before raged like a stormy wind, was now mild and tender—"Louise, I have divined your purpose—I know all now. At first, I did not understand your words; in my folly and jealousy I misconceived your meaning; you only wished to try me, to see if my love was armed and strong, if it was as bold and faithful as I have sworn it to be. Well, I stood the test badly, was weak and faint-hearted; but forgive me—forgive me, Louise, and strengthen my heart by confidence and faith in me."

He tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it.

"Must I repeat to your highness what I have said before? I do not understand you. What do you mean?"

"Ah," said the prince, "you are again my naughty, sportive Louise. Well, then, I will explain. Did you not say that you now love so truly, that you have promised to become the wife of the man you love?"

"Yes, I said that, your highness."

"And I," said the prince, seizing both her hands and gazing at her ardently—"I was so short-sighted, so ungrateful, as not to understand you. The many sorrows and vexations I suffer away from you have dimmed my eyes and prevented me from seeing what is written with golden letters upon your smiling lips and beaming eyes. Ah, Louise, I thank you for your precious words; at last you are captured, at last you have resolved to become the wife of him who adores you. I thank you, Louise, I thank you, and I swear that no earthly pomp or power could make me as proud and happy as this assurance of your love."

Louise gazed into his beautiful, smiling face with terror.

"Ah, my prince, my words have not the meaning you imagine. I spoke the simple truth. My heart has made its choice—since yesterday, I am the betrothed wife of Captain du Trouffle."

"That is not true," cried the prince, casting her hands violently from him. "You are very cruel to-day; you torture me with your fearful jests."

"No, your highness, I speak the truth. I am the betrothed of Captain du Trouffle."

"Since yesterday you are the betrothed of Captain du Trouffle!" repeated the prince, staring at her wildly. "And you say you love him, Louise?"

"Yes, your highness, I love him," said Louise, with a faint smile.

"It is impossible," cried the prince; "it is not true."

"And why should I deceive your highness?"

"Why?—ah, I understand all. Oh, Louise, my poor darling, how short-sighted I have been! Why did I not immediately suspect my brother?—he has spies to watch all my movements; they have at last discovered my love for you. Pöllnitz, who would do any thing for gold, has betrayed us to the king, who condemns me to marry according to my rank, and, to carry out his purpose surely, he now forces you to marry. Oh, Louise, say that this is so; acknowledge that the power of the king, and not your own heart, forced you to this engagement. It is impossible, it cannot be that you have forgotten the vows that we exchanged scarcely two weeks ago. It cannot be that you look upon the heart that loved you so deeply, so purely, as an idle plaything, to be thrown away so lightly! No, no, Louise, I have seen often in your beaming eyes, your eloquent smiles, I have felt in your soft and tender tones, that you loved me fondly; and now in your pale, sad face I see that you love me still, and that it is the king who wishes to separate us. My poor, lovely child, you have been intimidated; you think that my brother, who reigns supreme over millions, will yield to no obstacle, that it is vain to resist him. But you are mistaken, Louise; you have forgotten that I am Frederick's brother, that the proud, unconquerable blood of the Hohenzollerns flows also in my veins. Let my brother try to force me to his purpose; I shall be no weak tool in his hands. You had not firm confidence in your lover, Louise; you did not know that I would resign cheerfully rank and all family ties for your sake; you did not know that I had sworn to marry only the woman I love. This I must do to satisfy my heart and my honor, and also to show the king that Prince Henry is a free man. Now tell me, Louise, if I have not divined all. Is not this the

king's cruel work? Ah, you do not answer, you are silent. I understand—the king has made you swear not to betray him. Now look at me, Louise; make me a sign with your hand, tell me with your eyes, and I will comprehend you—I will take you in my arms and carry you to the altar. My God! Louise do you not see that I am waiting for this sign?—that you are torturing me?"

Louise raised her head, her heart was melting within her; she forgot her terror, and was ready to resist God, the king, and the whole world, to grasp the noble and unselfish love that the prince offered her. But her glance fell involuntarily upon the curtain, behind which the king stood, and it seemed to her as if she saw the angry, burning eyes of Frederick threatening to destroy her. She remembered her daughter, Fritz Wendel, and the world's mocking laughter, and was overcome.

"You are still silent," said the prince; "you give me neither sign nor glance."

Louise felt as if an iron hand was tearing her heart asunder.

"I really am at a loss what more to say or do," she said, in a careless tone, that made her own heart shudder. "It pleases your highness to make a jest of what I say. I am innocent, my prince, of any double meaning. Five weeks have passed since I saw you—I believed you had forgotten me; I did not reproach you, neither was I in despair. I soon found that it was stupid and dreary to have my heart unoccupied, and I sought for and soon found a lover, to whom my heart became a willing captive. Therefore, when Captain Trouffle pleaded earnestly for my hand, I had not the courage to say no. This is my only crime, your highness. I was not cruel to myself; I received the happiness that was offered. I have been called a coquette, my prince; it is time to bind myself in marriage bonds, and show the world that love can make an honest woman of me. Can your highness blame me for this?"

The prince listened with breathless attention; gradually his countenance changed, the color faded from his cheeks, the light from his eyes; a smile was still on his lips, but it was cold and mocking; his eyes burned with anger and contempt.

"No, madame," he said, with calm, proud indifference, "I do not blame you—I praise, I congratulate you. Captain du Trouffle is a most fortunate man—he will possess a most beautiful wife. When will this happy ceremony be performed?"

Madame von Kleist was unable to reply. She gazed with wild terror into his cold, iron face—she listened with horror to that voice, whose mild, soft tone had become suddenly so harsh, so stern.

The prince repeated his question, and his tone was harder and more imperious.

"The day is not fixed," said Louise; "we must first obtain the king's consent to our marriage."

"I shall take care it does not fail you," said the prince, quietly. "I will strengthen your petition to the king. Now, madame, you must forgive me for leaving you. Many greetings to your betrothed —I shall be introduced to him to-morrow at the parade. Farewell, madame!"

The prince made a slight bow, and, without glancing at her again, left the room slowly and proudly.

Louise gazed after him with mournful eyes, but he did not see it; he did not see how she fell, as if broken, to the floor, as if struck by lightning; and when the door closed on him she held her hands to Heaven pleadingly for mercy and forgiveness.

The *portière* now opened, and the king entered; his countenance was pale, his eyes tearful, but they sparkled with anger when he saw Louise upon the floor. For him she was but a heartless coquette, and he was angry with her because of the suffering she had caused his brother, for whom he felt the deepest pity and compassion.

But that was now past; the brother could weep a tear of pity, the king must be firm and relentless.

As he approached her, she raised herself from the ground and made a profound and ceremonious bow.

"You have repaired much of the evil you have done, madame," said the king, sternly. "You have played a dishonorable game with my brother. You enticed him to love you."

"I think I have atoned, sire," said Louise, faintly; "the prince no longer loves but despises me. Your commands are fulfilled to the letter, and I now beg your majesty's permission to withdraw."

"Go, madame; you have done your duty to-day, and I will also do mine. I shall not forget what I promised you when you are Madame du Trouffle. We will forget all the faults of Madame von Kleist."

He dismissed her with a slight bow, and gazed after her until she had disappeared.

At this moment, a heavy fall was heard in the antechamber. The door opened immediately, and the pale, disturbed face of Pöllnitz appeared.

"What is the matter, Pöllnitz?" asked the king, hastily.

"Oh, sire, poor Prince Henry has fainted."

The king was startled, and stepped quickly to the door, but he remained standing there until his features resumed their calm expression.

"He will recover," he said—"he will recover, for he is a man; in my youthful days I often fainted, but I recovered."

CHAPTER X.

THE CONQUERED.

PAINFUL and bitter were the days for Henry that followed his first disappointment. He passed them in rigid seclusion, in his lonely chambers; he would see no one, no cheerful word or gay laughter was allowed in his presence. The servants looked at him sorrowfully; and when the prince appeared at the parade the day after his painful interview with Louise, even the king found him so pale and suffering, he begged him to take a week's leave and strengthen and improve his health.

The prince smiled painfully at the king's proposition, but he accepted his leave of absence, and withdrew to the solitude of his rooms. His heart was wounded unto death, his soul was agonized.

Youth soon laid its healing balm upon his wounds and closed them; anger and contempt dried his tears, and soothed the anguish of his heart.

The king was right when he said of his brother, "He is a man, and will recover." He did recover, and these days of suffering made a man of him; his brow, once so clear and youthful, had received its first mark of sorrow; the lines of his face were harsh and stern, his features sharper and more decided. He had experienced his first disappointment—it had nerved and strengthened him.

Before his eight days' leave of absence had expired, his door was again open to his circle of friends and confidants.

His first invited guest was the grand chamberlain, Baron Pöllnitz. The prince welcomed him with a bright and cheerful face.

"Do you know why I wished to see you?" he asked. "You must tell me the *chronique scandaleuse* of our most honorable and virtuous city. Commence immediately. What is the *on dit* of the day?"

"Ah," sighed Pöllnitz, "life is now stupid, dull, and monotonous. As you say, every one has become most honorable and virtuous. No scandals or piquant adventures occur; baptisms, marriages, and burials are the only events. This is really a miserable existence; for as I do not wish to be baptized or to marry, and as I am not yet ready for burial, I really do not know why I exist."

"But those that are married and baptized, doubtless know why they exist," said the prince, smiling. "Tell me something of this happy class. Whose, for example, is the latest marriage?"

"The latest marriage?" said Pöllnitz, hesitating—"before answering, I must allow myself to ask after the condition of your heart. Does it still suffer?"

"No," cried the prince, "it does not suffer; it received a heavy shower of cold water, and was cured instantly."

"I rejoice to hear it, your highness, and congratulate you on your recovery, for truly there is no more painful disease than a suffering heart."

"I told you that I had recovered fully; tell me, therefore, your news without hesitation. You spoke of a marriage. Who were the happy lovers?"

"Your highness, Madame von Kleist has married," murmured Pöllnitz.

The prince received this blow without betraying the slightest emotion.

"When did the marriage take place?" he asked, with perfect composure.

"Yesterday; and I assure your highness that I never saw a happier or more brilliant bride. Love has transformed her into a blushing, timid maiden."

Prince Henry pressed his hand upon his heart with a quick, unconscious movement.

"I can well imagine that she was beautiful," said he, controlling his voice with a great effort. "Madame von Kleist is happy, and happiness always beautifies. And the bridegroom, M. du Trouffle, was he also handsome and happy?"

"Your highness knows the name of the bride-groom," said Pöllnitz, appearing astonished.

"Yes, Madame von Kleist told me herself when she announced her approaching marriage. But I am not acquainted with Du Trouffle—is he handsome?"

"Handsome and amiable, your highness, and besides, a very good officer. The king gave him, as a wedding present, a major's commission."

"Then the beautiful Louise is now Mrs. Major du Trouffle," said the prince, with a troubled smile. "Were you present at the wedding?"

"Yes, in the name of the king."

"Did she speak the decisive Yes, the vow of faith and obedience, with earnestness and confidence? Did she not blush, or droop her eyelids in doing so?"

"Oh, no; she smiled as if entranced, and raised her eyes to heaven, as if praying for God's blessing upon her vows."

"One thing more," said the prince, fixing his large, grave eyes with a searching expression upon Pöllnitz—"what is said of me? Am I regarded as a rejected lover, or as a faithless one; for doubtless all Berlin knows of my love for this lady, you having been our confidant."

"Oh, my prince, that is a hard insinuation," said Pöllnitz, sadly. "Your highness cannot really believe that—"

"No protestations, I pray you," interrupted the prince, "I believe I know you thoroughly, but I am not angry with you nor do I reproach you: you are a courtier, and one of the best and rarest type; you have intellect and knowledge, much experience and *savoir vivre;* I could desire no better company than yourself; but for one moment cast aside your character as a courtier, and tell me the truth: what does the world say of this marriage in regard to me?"

"Your highness desires me to tell you the truth?"

"Yes, I do."

"Now the important moment has come," thought Pöllnitz. "Now, if I am adroit, I believe I can obtain the payment of my debts."

"Well, then, your highness," said Pöllnitz, in answer to the prince, "I will tell you the truth, even should I incur your displeasure. I fear, my prince, you are regarded as a rejected lover, and Madame du Trouffle has succeeded in throwing a holy lustre around her beautiful brow. It is said that she refused your dishonorable proposals, and preferred being the virtuous wife of a major, to becoming the mistress of a prince."

"Go on," said the prince, hastily, as Pöllnitz ceased, and looked searchingly at him. "What do they say of me?"

"That you are in despair, and that you have retired to your chambers to weep and mourn over your lost love."

"Ah, they say that, do they?" cried the prince, with flashing eyes and darkened brow; "well, I will show this credulous world that they are mistaken. Is the king in Sans-Souci?"

"Yes, your highness."

"Well, go to him, and announce my visit; I will follow you on foot."

"We have won the day," cried Pöllnitz, as he approached the king; "the prince desires to make you a visit. He will be here immediately."

"Do you know what my brother wishes of me?" asked the king.

"I do not know, but I suspect, sire. I think he wishes to marry, in order to pique his faithless sweetheart."

"Go and receive the prince, and conduct him to me; then remain in the antechameber, and await until I call."

When Pöllnitz left, the king seized his flute hastily and began to play a soft, melting adagio. He was still playing, when the door opened, and the prince was announced. Henry stood in the doorway, and made the king a ceremonious bow.

The king continued to play. The low, pleading notes of the flute floated softly through the room; they touched the heart of the prince, and quieted its wild, stormy beating.

Was that the king's intention, or did he intend to harmonize his own spirit before speaking to his brother? Perhaps both, for Frederick's glance softened, and his face assumed a kind and mild expression.

When the adagio was finished, the king laid his flute aside and approached the prince.

"Forgive me, brother," he said, offering his hand—"forgive me for keeping you waiting, I always like to conclude what I commence. Now, I am entirely at your service, and as I am unfortunately not accustomed to receive such friendly visits from you, I must ask you what brings you to me, and how I can serve you?"

The fierce, violent nature of the prince slumbered but lightly. The king's words aroused it, and made his pulse and heart beat stormily.

"How you can serve me, my brother?" he said, hastily. "I will tell you, and truthfully, sire."

The king raised his head, and glanced angrily at the burning face of the prince.

"I am not accustomed to have my words repeated, and all find that out here to their cost," he said, sternly.

"Have the goodness, then, to tell me why you have pursued me so long and unrelentingly? What have I done to deserve your displeasure and such bitter humiliations?"

"Rather ask me what you have done to deserve my love and confidence," said the king, sternly. "I refer you to your own heart for an answer."

"Ah, your majesty promised to answer my questions, and now you evade them; but I will reply frankly. I have done nothing to deserve your love, but also nothing to make me unworthy of it. Why are you, who are so good and kind to all others, so stern and harsh with me?"

"I will tell you the truth," said the king, earnestly. "You have deserved my displeasure; you have desired to be a free man, to cast aside the yoke that Providence placed upon you; you had the grand presumption to dare to be the master of your own actions."

"And does your majesty desire and expect me to resign this most natural of human rights?" said the prince, angrily.

"Yes, I desire and expect it. I can truthfully say that I have given my brothers a good example in this particular."

"But you did not do this willingly. You were cruelly forced to submission, and you now wish to drive us to an extremity you have,

doubtlessly, long since forgotten. Now, you suffered and struggled before declaring yourself conquered."

"No," said the king, softly, "I have not forgotten. I still feel the wound in my soul, and at times it burns."

"And yet, my brother?"

"And yet I will have no pity with you. I say to you, as my father said to me: 'You must submit; you are a prince, and I am your king!' I have long since acknowledged that my father was right in his conduct to me. I was not only a disobedient son, but a rebellious subject. I richly deserved to mount the scaffold with Katte."

"Ah, my brother, there was a time when you wept for this faithful and unfortunate friend," cried the prince, reproachfully.

"The sons of kings have not the right to choose their own path, destiny has marked it out for them; they must follow it without wavering. I neither placed the crown upon my head, nor the yoke upon your neck. We must bear them patiently, as God and Providence have ordained, and wear them with grace and dignity. You, my brother, have acted like a wild horse of the desert—I have drawn the reins tight, that is all!"

"You have caught, bound, and tamed me," said the prince, with a faint smile; "only I feel that the bit still pains, and that my limbs still tremble. But I am ready to submit, and I came to tell you so. You desire me to marry, I consent; but I hold you responsible for the happiness of this marriage. At God's throne, I will call you to justify yourself, and there we will speak as equals, as man to man. What right had you to rob me of my most holy and beautiful possession? What right have you to lay a heavy chain on heart and hand, that love will not help me to bear? I hold you responsible for my miserable life, my shattered hopes. Will you accept these conditions? Do you still wish me to marry?"

"I accept the conditions," said the king, solemnly. "I desire you to marry."

"I presume your majesty has chosen a bride for me?"

"You are right, *mon cher frère*. I have selected the Princess Wilhelmina, daughter of Prince Max, of Hesse-Cassel. She not only brings you a fortune, but youth, beauty, and amiability."

"I thank you, sire," said the prince, coldly and formally. "I would marry her if she were ugly, old, and unamiable. But is it allowed me to add one condition?"

"Speak, my brother, I am listening."

The prince did not anwser immediately; he breathed quickly and heavily, and a glowing red suffused his pale, trembling face.

"Speak, my brother. Name your conditions," said the king.

"Well, then, so be it. My first condition is that I may be allowed to have a brilliant wedding. I wish to invite not only the entire court, but a goodly number of Berliners; I desire all Berlin to take part in my happiness, and to convince every one, by my gay demeanor and my entertainment, that I joyfully accept my bride, the princess."

The king's eyes rested sorrowfully upon his brother's countenance. He fully understood the emotions of his heart, and knew that his brother wished to wound and humiliate his faithless sweetheart by his marriage; that Henry only submitted to his wishes because his proud heart rebelled at the thought of being pitied as a rejected lover. But he was considerate, and would not let it appear that he understood him.

"I agree to this first proposition," said the king, after a pause, "and I hope you will allow me to be present at this beautiful *fête*, and convince Berlin that we are in hearty unison. Have you no other conditions?"

"Yes, one more."

"What is it?"

"That my marriage shall take place, at the latest, in a month."

"You will thus fulfil my particular and personal wish," said the king, smiling. "I am anxious to have this marriage over, for, after the gayeties, I wish to leave Berlin. All the arrangements and contracts are completed, and I think now there is no obstacle in the way of the marriage. Have you another wish, my brother?"

"No, sire."

"Then allow me to beg you to grant me a favor. I wish to leave a kind remembrance of this eventful hour in your heart, and I therefore give you a small memento of the same. Will you accept my castle of Rheinsberg, with all its surroundings, as a present from me? Will you grant me this pleasure, my brother?"

The king offered his hand, with a loving smile, to Henry, and received with apparent pleasure his ardent thanks.

"I chose Rheinsberg," he said, kindly, "not because it is my favorite palace, and I have passed many pleasant and happy days there, but because none of my other palaces are so appropriate for a prince who is discontented with his king. I have made that experience myself, and I give you Rheinsberg, as my father gave it to me. Go to Rheinsberg when you are angry with me and the world; there you can pass the first months of your marriage, and God grant it may be a happy one!"

The prince answered him with a cold smile, and begged leave to withdraw, that he might make the necessary preparations for his wedding.

"We will both make our preparations," said the king, as he bade the prince farewell—"you with your major-domo, and I with Baron Pöllnitz, whom I shall send as ambassador to Cassel."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRAVELLING MUSICIANS.

THE feasts, illuminations, and balls given in honor of the newly-married couple, Henry and his wife, the Princess Wilhelmina, were at an end. The prince and his followers had withdrawn to Rheinsberg, and many were the rumors in Berlin of the brilliant feasts with which he welcomed his beautiful bride. She was truly lovely, and the good Berliners, who had received her with such hearty greetings when she appeared with the prince on the balcony, or showed herself to the people in an open carriage, declared there could be no happier couple than the prince and his wife; they declared that the large, dark eyes of the princess rested upon the prince with inexpressible tenderness, and that the prince always returned her glance with a joyous smile. It was therefore decided that the prince was a happy husband, and the blessings of the Berliners followed the charming princess to Rheinsberg, where the young couple were to pass their honeymoon.

While the prince was giving splendid *fêtes*, and seeking distraction, and hoping to forget his private griefs, or perhaps wishing to deceive the world as to his real feelings, the king left Sans-Souci, to commence one of his customary military inspection trips. But he did not go to Königsberg, as was supposed; and if Trenck really had the intention of murdering him during his sojourn there, it was rendered impossible by the change in the king's plans. Frederick made a tour in his Rhine provinces. At Cleves he dismissed his followers, and they returned to Berlin.

The king declared he needed rest, and wished to pass a few days in undisturbed quiet at the castle of Moyland.

No one accompanied him but Colonel Balby, his intimate friend, and his cabinet-hussar, Deesen. The king was in an uncommonly good humor, and his eyes sparkled with delight. After a short rest in his chamber, he desired to see Colonel Balby.

To his great astonishment, the colonel found him searching through a trunk, which contained a few articles of clothing little calculated to arrest the attention of a king.

"Balby," said the king, solemnly, but with a roguish sparkle of the eye, "I wish to present you this plain brown suit. I owe you a

reward for your hearty friendship and your faithful services. This is a princely gift. Take it as a mark of my grateful regard. That you may be convinced, Balby, that I have long been occupied in preparing this surprise for you, I inform you that these rich articles were made secretly for you in Berlin, by your tailor; I packed them myself, and brought them here for you. Accept them, then, my friend, and wear them in memory of Frederick."

With a solemn bow, the king offered Balby the clothes.

The colonel received this strange present with an astonished and somewhat confused countenance.

The king laughed merrily. "What," he said, pathetically, "are you not contented with the favor I have shown you?"

Balby knew by the comic manner of the king that the sombre suit hid a secret, and he thought it wise to allow the king to take his own time for explanation.

"Sire," he said, emphatically, "content is not the word to express my rapture. I am enthusiastic, speechless at this unheard-of favor. I am filled with profound gratitude to your majesty for having invented a new costume for me, whose lovely color will make me appear like a large coffee-bean, and make all the coffee sisters adore me."

The king was highly amused. "This dress certainly has the power of enchantment. When Colonel Balby puts on these clothes he will be invisible, but he shall not undergo this transformation alone. See, here is another suit, exactly like yours, and this is mine. When I array myself in it, I am no longer the king of Prussia, but a free, happy man."

"Ah, you are speaking of a disguise," cried the colonel.

"Yes, we will amuse ourselves by playing the *rôle* of common men for a while, and wander about unnoticed and undisturbed. Are you agreed, Balby, or do you love your colonel's uniform better than your freedom?"

"Am I agreed, sire?" cried the colonel; "I am delighted with this genial thought."

"Then take your dress, friend, and put it on. But stay. Did you bring your violin with you, as I told you?"

"Yes, sire."

"Well, then, when you are dressed, put your violin in a case, and with the case under your arm, and a little money in your pocket, go to the pavilion at the farthest end of the garden; there I will meet you. Now hasten, friend, we have no time to lose."

According to the king's orders, Colonel Balby dressed and went to the pavilion. He did not find the king, but two strange men there. One of them had on a brown coat, the color of his own,

ornamented with large buttons of mother-of-pearl; black pantaloons, and shoes with large buckles, set with dull white stones; the lace on his sleeves and vest was very coarse. He wore a three-cornered hat, without ornament; from under the hat fell long, brown, unpowdered hair.

Behind this stranger there stood another, in plain, simple clothes; under one arm he carried a small bag, and under the other a case that contained either a yard-stick or a flute. He returned the colonel's salutation with a grimace and a profound bow. A short pause ensued, then the supposed strangers laughed heartily and exclaimed:

"Do you not know us, Balby?"

Their voices started the colonel, and he stepped back.

"Sire, it is yourself."

"Yes, it is I, Frederick—not the king. Yes, I am Frederick, and this capital servant is my good Deesen, who has sworn solemnly not to betray our incognito, and to give no one reason to suspect his high dignity as royal cabinet-hussar. For love of us he will, for a few days, be the servant of two simple, untitled musicians, who are travelling around the world, seeking their fortunes, but who, unfortunately, have no letters of recommendation."

"But who will recommend themselves by their talents and accomplishments."

The king laughed aloud. "Balby, you forget that you are a poor musician, chatting with your comrade. Truly your courtly bow suits your dress as little as a lace veil would a beggar's attire; you must lay your fine manners aside for a short time, for, with them, you would appear to the village beauties we may meet like a monkey, and they would laugh at instead of kissing you."

"So we are to meet country beauties," said Colonel Balby, no longer able to suppress his curiosity. "Tell me, sire, where are we going, and what are we going to do? I shall die of curiosity."

"Make an effort to die," said the king, gayly; "you will find it is not so easy to do as you imagine. But I will torture you no longer. You ask what we are going to do. Well, we are going to amuse ourselves and seek adventures. You ask where we are going. Ask that question of the sparrow that sits on the house-top—ask where it is going, and what is the aim of its journey. It will reply, the next bush, the nearest tree, the topmost bough of a weeping willow, which stands on a lonely grave; the mast of a ship, sailing on the wide sea; or the branch of a noble beech, waving before the window of a beautiful maiden. I am as incapable of telling you the exact aim and end of our journey, friend, as that little bird would be. We are as free as the birds of the air. Come!

come! let us fly, for see, the little sparrow has flown—let us follow it."

And with a beaming smile illuminating his countenance, like a ray of the morning sun, the king took the arm of his friend, and followed by his servant and cabinet-hussar, Deesen, left the pavilion.

As they stood at the little gate of the garden, the king said to Deesen:

"You must be for us the angel with the flaming sword, and open the gates of paradise, but not to cast us out."

Deesen opened the gate, and our adventurers entered "the wide, wide world."

"Let us stand here a few moments," said the king, as his glance rested upon the green fields spread far and wide around him. "How great and beautiful the world appears to-day! Observe Nature's grand silence, yet the air is full of a thousand voices; and the white clouds wandering dreamily in the blue heavens above, are they not the misty veils with which the gods of Olympus conceal their charms?"

"Ah! sire," said Balby, with a loving glance at the king's handsome face—"ah, sire, my eyes have no time to gaze at Nature's charms, they are occupied with yourself. When I look upon you, I feel that man is indeed made in the image of God."

"Were I a god, I should not be content to resemble this worn, faded face. Come, now, let us be off! Give me your instrument, Deesen, I will carry it. Now I look like a travelling apprentice seeking his fortune. The world is all before him where to choose his place of rest, and Providence his guide. I envy him. He is a free man!"

"Truly, these poor apprentices would not believe that a king was envying them their fate," said Balby, laughing.

"Still they are to be envied," said the king, "for they are free. No, nó, at present I envy no one; the world and its sunshine belong to me. We will go to Amsterdam, and enjoy the galleries and museums."

"I thank your majesty," said Balby, laughing, "you have saved my life. I should have died of curiosity if you had not spoken. Now, I feel powerful and strong, and can keep pace with your majesty's wandering steps."

Silently they walked on until they reached a sign-post.

"We are now on the border—let us bid farewell to the Prussian colors, we see them for the last time. Sire, we will greet them with reverence."

He took off his hat and bowed lowly before the black and white

colors of Prussia, a greeting that Deesen imitated with the fervor of a patriot.

The king did not unite in their enthusiasm; he was writing with his stick upon the ground.

"Come here, Balby, and read this," he said, pointing to the lines he had traced. "Can you read them?"

"Certainly," said Balby, "the words are, 'majesty' and 'sire.'"

"So they are, friend. I leave these two words on the borders of Prussia; perhaps on our return we may find and resume them. But as long as we are on the soil of Holland there must be no majesty, no sire."

"What, then, must I call my king?"

"You must call him friend, *voilà tout.*"

"And I?" asked Deesen, respectfully; "will your majesty be so gracious as to tell me your name?"

"I am Mr. Zoller, travelling musician; and should any one ask you what I want in Amsterdam, tell them I intend giving a concert. *En avant, mes amis.* There lies the first small village of Holland; in an hour we shall be there, and then we will take the stage and go a little into the interior. *En avant, en avant!*"

CHAPTER XII.

TRAVELLING ADVENTURES.

THE stage stood before the tavern at Grave, and awaited its passengers. The departure of the stage was an important occurrence to the inhabitants of the little town—an occurrence that disturbed the monotony of their lives for a few moments, and showed them at least now and then a new face, that gave them something to think of, and made them dream of the far-off city where the envied travellers were going.

To-day all Grave was in commotion and excitement. The strangers had arrived at the post-house, and after partaking of an excellent dinner, engaged three seats in the stage. The good people of Grave hoped to see three strange faces looking out of the stage window; many were the surmises of their destiny and their possible motives for travelling. They commenced these investigations while the strangers were still with them.

A man had seen them enter the city, dusty and exhausted, and he declared that the glance which the two men in brown coats had cast at his young wife, who had come to the window at his call, was very bold—yes, even suspicious; and it seemed very remarkable

to him that such plain, ordinary-looking wanderers should have a servant—for, doubtless, the man walking behind them, carrying the very small carpet-bag, was their servant; but, truly, he appeared to be a proud person, and had the haughty bearing of a general or a field-marshal; he would not even return the friendly greetings of the people he passed. His masters could not be distinguished or rich, for both of them carried a case under their arms. What could be in those long cases; what secret was hidden there? Perhaps they held pistols, and the good people of Grave would have to deal with robbers or murderers. The appearance of the strangers was wild and bold enough to allow of the worst suspicions.

The whole town, as before mentioned, was in commotion, and all were anxious to see the three strangers, about whom there was certainly something mysterious. They had the manners and bearing of noblemen, but were dressed like common men.

A crowd of idlers had assembled before the post-house, whispering and staring at the windows of the guests' rooms. At last their curiosity was about to be gratified—at last the servant appeared with the little carpet-bag, and placed it in the stage, and returned for the two cases, whose contents they would so greedily have known. The postilion blew his horn, the moment of departure had arrived.

A murmur was heard through the crowd—the strangers appeared, they approached the stage, and with such haughty and commanding glances that the men nearest them stepped timidly back.

The postilion sounded his horn again; the strangers were entering the stage. At the door stood the postmaster, and behind him his wife, the commanding postmistress.

"Niclas," she whispered, "I must and will know who these strangers are. Go and demand their passports."

The obedient Niclas stepped out and cried in a thundering voice to the postilion, who was just about to start, to wait. Stepping to the stage, he opened the door.

"Your passports, gentlemen," he said, roughly. "You forgot to show me your passports."

The curious observers breathed more freely, and nodded encouragingly to the daring postmaster.

"You rejoice," murmured his wife, who was still standing in the door, from whence she saw all that passed, and seemed to divine the thoughts of her gaping friends—"you rejoice, but you shall know nothing. I shall not satisfy your curiosity."

Mr. Niclas still stood at the door of the stage. His demand had not been attended to; he repeated it for the third time.

"Is it customary here to demand passports of travellers?" asked a commanding voice from the stage.

"We can demand them if we wish to do so."

"And why do you wish it now?" said the same voice.

"I wish it simply because I wish it," was the reply.

A stern face now appeared at the door, looking angrily at the postmaster.

"Think what you say, sir, and be respectful."

"Silence!" interrupted the one who had first spoken. "Do not let us make an unnecessary disturbance, *mon ami*. Why do you wish to see our passports, sir?"

"Why?" asked Niclas, who was proud to play so distinguished a part before his comrades—"you wish to know why I desire to see your pasports? Well, then, because you appear to me to be suspicious characters."

A gay laugh was heard from the stage. "Why do you suspect us?"

"Because I never trust people travelling without baggage," was the laconic reply.

"Bravo! well answered," cried the crowd, and even Madame Niclas was surprised to see her husband show such daring courage.

"We need no baggage. We are travelling musicians, going to Amsterdam."

"Travelling musicians! All the more reason for mistrusting you; no good was ever heard of wandering musicians."

"You are becoming impertinent, sir," and Balby, the tallest and youngest of the two friends, sprang from the stage, while the servant swung himself from the box, where he was sitting with the postilion, and with an enraged countenance placed himself beside his master.

"If you dare to speak another insulting word, you are lost," cried Balby.

A hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice murmured in his ear:

"Do not compromise us."

The king now also left the stage, and tried to subdue the anger of his companion.

"Pardon, sir, the violence of my friend," said the king, with an ironical smile, as he bowed to the postmaster. "We are not accustomed to being questioned and suspected in this manner, and I can assure you that, although we are travelling musicians, as it pleased you to say, we are honest people, and have played before kings and queens."

"If you are honest, show me your passports; no honest man travels without one!"

"It appears to me that no rascal should travel without one," said the king.

"I cannot tell who is a rascal; you may be one for aught I know."

Balby uttered an angry exclamation and stepped nearer to the daring postmaster, while his servant shook his fist threateningly at Niclas.

The king dispelled their anger with a single glance.

"Sir," he said to Niclas, "God made my face, and it is not my fault if it does not please you; but concerning our passports, they are lying well preserved in my carpet-bag. I should think that would suffice you."

"No, that does not suffice me," screamed Niclas; "show me your passports if I am to believe that you are not vagabonds."

"You dare to call us vagabonds?" cried the king, whose patience now also appeared exhausted, and whose clear brow was slightly clouded.

"The police consider every one criminal until he has proved he is not so," said Niclas, emphatically.

The king's anger was already subdued.

"In the eyes of the police, criminality is then the normal condition of mankind," he said, smilingly.

"Sir, you have no right to question the police so pointedly," said Niclas, sternly. "You are here to be questioned, and not to question."

The king laughingly arrested the uplifted arm of his companion.

"*Mon Dieu,*" he murmured, "do you not see that this is amusing me highly? Ask, sir, I am ready to answer."

"Have you a pass?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then give it to me to *visé.*"

"To do so, I should have to open my bag, and that would be very inconvenient; but, if the law absolutely demands it, I will do it."

"The law demands it."

The king motioned to his servant, and ordered him to carry the bag into the house.

"Why this delay—why this unnecessary loss of time?" asked Niclas. "The postilion can wait no longer. If he arrives too late at the next station, he will be fined."

"I will not wait another minute," cried the postilion, determinately; "get in, or I shall start without you."

"Show me your passports, and then get in," cried Niclas.

The strangers appeared confused and undecided. Niclas looked triumphantly at his immense crowd of listeners, who were gazing at him with amazement, awaiting in breathless stillness the unravelling of this scene.

"Get in, or I shall start," repeated the postilion.

"Give me your passports, or I will not let you go!" screamed

Niclas; and taking the two mysterious cases from the stage, he placed them before the strangers.

"Let us go into the house," whispered the king to his friends; "we must make *bonne mine à mauvais jeu;*" and he approached the door of the house—there stood the wife of the postmaster, with sparkling eyes and a malicious grin.

"The postilion is going, and you will lose your money," she said; "they never return money when once they have it."

"Ah! I thought that was only a habit of the church," said the king, laughing; "nevertheless, the postmaster can keep what he has. Will you have the kindness to show me a room, where I can open my bag at leisure, and send some coffee and good wine to us?"

There was something so commanding in the king's voice, so imposing in his whole appearance, that even the all-conquering Madame Niclas felt awed, and she silently stepped forward and showed him her best room. The servant followed with the two cases and the bag, and laid them upon the table, then placed himself at the door.

"Now, madame, leave us," ordered the king, "and do as I told you."

Madame Niclas left, and the gentlemen were once more alone.

"Now, what shall we do?" said the king, smilingly. "I believe there is danger of our wonderful trip falling through."

"It is only necessary for your majesty to make yourself known to the postmaster," said Colonel Balby.

"And if he will not believe me, this *fripon* who declares that no one could tell by my appearance whether I was a rascal or not, this dull-eyed simpleton, who will not see the royal mark upon my brow, which my courtiers see so plainly written there? No, no, my friend, that is not the way. We have undertaken to travel as ordinary men—we must now see how common men get through the world. It is necessary to show the police that we are at least honest men. Happily, I believe I have the means to do so at hand. Open our ominous bag, friend Balby; I think you will discover my portfolio, and in it a few blank passes, and my state seal."

Colonel Balby did as the king ordered, and drew from the bag the portfolio, with its precious contents.

The king bade Balby sit down and fill up the blanks at his dictation.

The pass was drawn up for the two brothers, Frederick and Henry Zoller, accompanied by their servant, with the intention of travelling through Holland.

The king placed his signature under this important document.

"Now, it is only necessary to put the state seal under it, and we shall be free; but how will we get a light?"

"I will obtain one immediately," said Balby, hastening to the door.

The king held him back. "My brother, you are very innocent and thoughtless. You forget entirely that we are suspected criminals. Should we demand a light, and immediately appear with our passes, do you not believe that this dragon of a postmaster would immediately think that we had written them ourselves, and put a forged seal under them?"

"How, then, are we to get a light?" said Balby, confused.

The king thought a moment, then laughed gayly.

"I have found a way," he said; "go down into the dining-room, where I noticed an eternal lamp burning, not to do honor to the Mother of God, but to smokers; light your cigar and bring it here. I will light the sealing-wax by it, and we will have the advantage of drowning the smell of the wax with the smoke."

Balby flew away, and soon returned with the burning cigar; the king lit the sealing-wax, and put the seal under the passport.

"This will proclaim us free from all crime. Now, brother Henry, call the worthy postmaster."

When Niclas received the passport from the king's hand his countenance cleared, and he made the two gentlemen a graceful bow, and begged them to excuse the severity that his duty made necessary.

"We have now entirely convinced you that we are honest people," said the king, smiling, "and you will forgive us that we have so little baggage."

"Well, I understand," said Mr. Niclas, confusedly, "musicians are seldom rich, but live from hand to mouth, and must thank God if their clothes are good and clean. Yours are entirely new, and you need no baggage."

The king laughed merrily. "Can we now go?" he asked.

"Yes; but how, sir? You doubtlessly heard that the postilion left as soon as you entered the house."

"Consequently we are without a conveyance; we have paid for our places for nothing, and must remain in this miserable place," said the king, impatiently.

Niclas reddened with anger. "Sir, what right have you to call the town of Grave a miserable place? Believe me, it would be very difficult for you to become a citizen of this miserable place, for you must prove that you have means enough to live in a decent manner, and it appears to me—"

"That we do not possess them," said the king; "*vraiment*, you are right, our means are very insufficient, and as the inhabitants of Grave will not grant us the rights of citizens, it is better for us to

leave immediately. Have, therefore, the goodness to furnish us with the means of doing so."

"There are two ways, an expensive and a cheap one," said Niclas, proudly: "extra post, or the drag-boat. The first is for respectable people, the second for those who have nothing, and are nothing."

"Then the last is for us," said the king, laughing. "Is it not so, brother Henry?—it is best for us to go in the drag-boat."

"That would be best, brother Frederick."

"Have the kindness to call our servant to take the bag, and you, Mr. Niclas, please give us a guide to show us to the canal."

The king took his box and approached the door.

"And my coffee, and the wine," asked Mrs. Niclas, just entering with the drinks.

"We have no time to make use of them, madame," said the king, as he passed her, to leave the room.

But Madame Niclas held him back.

"No time to make use of them," she cried; "but I had to take time to make the coffee, and bring the wine from the cellar."

"*Mais, mon Dieu,* madame," said the impatient king.

"*Mais, mon Dieu, monsieur, vous croyez que je travaillerai pour le roi de Prusse, c'est-à-dire sans paiement.*"

The king broke out into a hearty laugh, and Balby had to join him, but much against his will.

"Brother Henry," said the king, laughing, "that is a curious way of speaking; '*travailler pour le roi de Prusse,*' means here to work for nothing. I beg you to convince this good woman that she has not worked for the King of Prussia, and pay her well. Madame, I have the honor to bid you farewell, and be assured it will always cheer me to think of you, and to recall your charming speech."

The king laughingly took his friend's arm, and nodded kindly to Madame Niclas as he went down the steps.

"I tell you what," said Madame Niclas, as she stood at the door with her husband, watching the departing strangers, who, in company with the guide and their servant, were walking down the street that led to the canal—"I tell you I do not trust those strangers, the little one in particular; he had a very suspicious look."

"But his passport was all right."

"But, nevertheless, all is not right with them. These strangers are disguised princes or robbers, I am fully convinced."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAG-BOAT.

WHAT a crowd, what noise, what laughing and chatting! How bright and happy these people are who have nothing and are nothing! How gayly they laugh and talk together—with what stoical equanimity they regard the slow motion of the boat! they accept it as an unalterable necessity. How kindly they assist each other; with what natural politeness the men leave the best seats for the women!

The boat is very much crowded. There are a great number of those amiable people who are nothing, and have nothing, moving from place to place cheerily.

The men on the shore who, with the aid of ropes, are pulling the boat, those two-legged horses, groan from exertion. The bagpipe player is making his gayest music, but in vain—he cannot allure the young people to dance; there is no place for dancing, the large deck of the boat is covered with human beings. Old men, and even women, are obliged to stand; the two long benches running down both sides of the boat are filled.

The king enjoyed the scene immensely. The free life about him, the entire indifference to his own person, charmed and delighted him. He leaned against the cabin, by which he was sitting, and regarded the crowd before him. Suddenly he was touched on the shoulder, and not in the gentlest manner. Looking up, he met the discontented face of a peasant, who was speaking violently, but in Dutch, and the king did not understand him; he therefore slightly shrugged his shoulders and remained quiet.

The angry peasant continued to gesticulate, and pointed excitedly at the king, and then at a pale young woman who was standing before him, and held two children in her arms.

The king still shrugged his shoulders silently, but when the peasant grasped him for the second time he waved him off, and his eye was so stern that the terrified and astonished peasant stepped back involuntarily.

At this moment a displeased murmur was heard among the crowd, and a number arranged themselves by the side of the peasant, who approached the king with a determined countenance.

The king remained sitting, and looked surprised at the threatening countenances of the people, whose angry words he tried in vain to comprehend.

The still increasing crowd was suddenly separated by two strong

arms, and Balby, who had been sitting at the other end of the boat, now approached the king, accompanied by a friend, and placed himself at the king's side.

"Tell me what these men want, *mon ami*," said Frederick, hastily; "I do not understand Dutch."

"I understand it, sir," said the friend who accompanied Balby, "these people are reproaching you."

"Reproaching me! And why?"

The stranger turned to the peasant who had first spoken, and who now began to make himself heard again in loud and angry tones.

"Monsieur," said the stranger, "these good people are angry with you, and, it appears to me, not entirely without cause. There is a language that is understood without words, its vocabulary is in the heart. Here stands a poor, sick woman, with her twins in her arms. You, monsieur, are the only man seated. These good people think it would be but proper for you to resign your seat."

"This is unheard-of insolence," exclaimed Balby, placing himself determinedly before the king; "let any one dare advance a step farther, and I—"

"Quiet, *cher frère*, the people are right, and I am ashamed of myself that I did not understand them at once."

He rose and passed through the crowd with a calm, kindly face, and, not appearing to notice them, approached the young woman, who was kneeling, exhausted, on the floor. With a kind, sympathetic smile, he raised her and led her to his seat. There was something so noble and winning in his manner, that those who were so shortly before indignant, were unconsciously touched. A murmur of approval was heard; the rough faces beamed with friendly smiles.

The king did not observe this, he was still occupied with the poor woman, and, while appearing to play with the children, gave each of them a gold piece. But their little hands were not accustomed to carry such treasures, and could not hold them securely. The two gold pieces rolled to the ground, and the ringing noise announced the rich gift of Frederick. Loud cries of delight were heard, and the men waved their hats in the air. The king reddened, and looked down in confusion.

The peasant, who had first been so violent toward the king, and at whose feet the money had fallen, picked it up and gave it to the children; then, with a loud laugh, he offered his big, rough hand to the king, and said something in a kindly tone.

"The good man is thanking you, sir," said the stranger. "He thinks you a clever, good-hearted fellow, and begs you to excuse his uncalled-for violence."

The king answered with a silent bow. He who was accustomed

to receive the world's approval as his just tribute, was confused and ashamed at the applause of these poor people.

The king was right in saying he left his royalty on Prussian soil; he really was embarrassed at this publicity, and was glad when Deesen announced that lunch was prepared for him. He gave Balby a nod to follow, and withdrew into the cabin.

"Truly, if every-day life had so many adventures, I do not understand how any one can complain of *ennui*. Through what varied scenes I have passed to-day!"

"But our adventures arise from the peculiarity of our situation," said Balby. "All these little *contretemps* are annoying and disagreeable; but seem only amusing to a king in disguise."

"But a disguised king learns many things," said Frederick, smiling; "from to-day, I shall be no longer surprised to hear the police called a hateful institution. *Vraiment*, its authority and power is vexatious, but necessary. Never speak again of my god-like countenance, or the seal of greatness which the Creator has put upon the brow of princes to distinguish them from the rest of mankind. Mons. Niclas saw nothing great stamped upon my brow; to him I had the face of a criminal—my passport only made an honest man of me. Come, friends, let us refresh ourselves."

While eating, the king chatted pleasantly with Balby of the charming adventures of the day.

"Truly," he said, laughing, as the details of the scene on deck were discussed, "without the interference of that learned Dutchman, the King of Prussia would have been in dangerous and close contact with the respectable peasant. Ah, I did not even thank my protecting angel. Did you speak to him, brother Henry? Where is he from, and what is his name?"

"I do not know, sir; but from his speech and manner he appeared to me to be an amiable and cultivated gentleman."

"Go and invite him to take a piece of pie with us. Tell him Mr. Zoller wishes to thank him for his assistance, and begs the honor of his acquaintance. You see, my friend, I am learning how to be polite, to flatter, and conciliate, as becomes a poor travelling musician. I beg you, choose your words well. Be civil, or he might refuse to come, and I thirst for company."

Balby returned in a few moments, with the stranger.

"Here, my friend," said Balby, "I bring you our deliverer in time of need. He will gladly take his share of the pie."

"And he richly deserves it," said the king, as he greeted the stranger politely. "Truly, monsieur, I am very much indebted to you, and this piece of pie that I have the honor to offer you is but a poor reward for your services. I believe I never saw larger fists

than that terrible peasant's; a closer acquaintance with them would have been very disagreeable. I thank you for preventing it."

"Travellers make a variety of acquaintances," said the stranger, laughing, and seating himself on the bench by the king's side, with a familiarity that terrified Balby. "I count you, sir, among the agreeable ones, and I thank you for this privilege."

"I hope you will make the acquaintance of this pie, and find it agreeable," said the king. "Eat, monsieur, and let us chat in the mean while—Henry, why are you standing there so grave and respectful, not daring to be seated? I do not believe this gentleman to be a prince travelling incognito."

"No, sir, take your place," exclaimed the stranger, laughing, "you will not offend etiquette. I give you my word that I am no concealed prince, and no worshipper of princes. I am proud to declare this."

"Ah! you are proud not to be a prince?"

"Certainly, sir."

"It appears to me," said Balby, looking at the king, "that a prince has a great and enviable position."

"But a position, unfortunately, that but few princes know how to fill worthily," said the king, smiling. "Every man who is sufficient for himself is to be envied."

"You speak my thoughts exactly, sir," said the stranger, who had commenced eating his piece of pie with great zeal. "Only the free are happy.

"Are you happy?" asked the king.

"Yes, sir; at least for the moment I am."

"What countryman are you?"

"I am a Swiss, sir."

"A worthy and respectable people. From what part of Switzerland do you come?"

"From the little town of Morges."

"Not far, then, from Lausanne, and the lovely lake of Geneva; not far from Ferney, where the great Voltaire resides, and from whence he darts his scorching, lightning-flashes to-day upon those whom he blessed yesterday. Are you satisfied with your government? Are not your patrician families a little too proud? Are not even the citizens of Berne arrogant and imperious?"

"We have to complain of them, sir, but very rarely."

"Are you now residing in Holland?"

"No, I am travelling," answered the stranger, shortly. He had held for a long time a piece of pie on his fork, trying in vain to put it in his mouth.

The king had not observed this; he had forgotten that kings and

princes only have the right to carry on a conversation wholly with questions, and that it did not become Mr. Zoller to be so inquisitive.

"What brought you here?" he asked, hastily.

"To complete my studies, sir," and, with a clouded brow, the stranger laid his fork and pie upon his plate.

But the king's questions flowed on in a continued stream.

"Do you propose to remain here?"

"I believe not, or rather I do not yet know," answered the stranger, with a sarcastic smile, that brought Balby to desperation.

"Are not the various forms of government of Switzerland somewhat confusing in a political point of view?"

"No, for all know that the cantons are free, as they should be."

"Does that not lead to skepticism and indifference?"

The stranger's patience was exhausted; without answering the king, he pushed back his plate and arose from the table.

"Sir, allow me to say that, in consideration of a piece of pie, which you will not even give me time to eat, you ask too many questions."

"You are right, and I beg your pardon," said the king, as he smilingly nodded at Balby to remain quiet. "We travel to improve ourselves, but you have just cause of complaint. I will give you time to eat your piece of pie. Eat, therefore, monsieur, and when you have finished, if it is agreeable, we will chat awhile longer."

When the stranger arose to depart, after an animated and interesting conversation, the king offered him his hand.

"Give me your address," he said, "that is, I beg of you to do so. You say you have not yet chosen a profession; perhaps I may have the opportunity of being useful to you."

The Swiss gave him his card, with many thanks, and returned to the deck.

The king gazed thoughtfully after him.

"That man pleases me, and when I am no longer a poor musician, I shall call him to my side.—Well, brother Henry, what do you think of this man, who, as I see, is named Mr. Le Catt?"

"I find him rather curt," said Balby, "and he appears to be a great republican."

"You mean because he hates princes, and was somewhat rude to me. Concerning the first, you must excuse it in a republican, and I confess that were I in his place I would probably do the same as to the last, he was right to give Mr. Zoller a lesson in manners. Poor Zoller is not yet acquainted with the customs of the common world, and makes all manner of mistakes against *bon ton*. I

believe to-day is not the first time he has been reproved for want of manners."

"Mr. Zoller is every inch a king," said Balby, laughing.

[NOTE.—The king's conversation with Mr. Le Catt is historical (see Thiébault, vol. i., p. 218). The king did not forget his travelling adventure, but on his return to Prussia, called Le Catt to court and gave him the position of lecturer, and for twenty years he enjoyed the favor and confidence of the king.]

CHAPTER XIV

IN AMSTERDAM.

WEARIED, indeed utterly exhausted, the king and Balby returned to the hotel of the Black Raven, at that time the most celebrated in Amsterdam. They had been wandering about the entire day, examining with never-ceasing interest and delight the treasures of art which the rich patricians of Amsterdam had collected in their princely homes and the public museums. No one supposed that this small man in the brown coat, with dusty shoes and coarse, unadorned hat, could be a king—a king whose fame resounded throughout the whole of Europe. Frederick had enjoyed the great happiness of pursuing his journey and his studies unnoticed and unknown. He had many amusing and romantic adventures; and the joy of being an independent man, of which he had heretofore only dreamed, he was now realizing fully.

The king was compelled now to confess that his freedom and manhood were completely overcome. Hunger had conquered him —hunger! the earthly enemy of all great ideas and exalted feelings. The king was hungry! He was obliged to yield to that physical power which even the rulers of this world must obey, and Balby and himself had returned to the hotel to eat and refresh themselves.

"Now, friend, see that you order something to rejoice and strengthen our humanity," said Frederick, stretching himself comfortably upon the divan. "It is a real pleasure to me to be hungry and partake of a good meal—a pleasure which the King of Prussia will often envy the Messieurs Zoller. To be hungry and to eat is one of life's rare enjoyments generally denied to kings, and yet," whispered he, thoughtfully, "our whole life is nothing but a never-ceasing hungering and thirsting after happiness, content, and rest. The world alas! gives no repose, no satisfying portion. Brother Henry, let us eat and be joyful: let us even meditate on a good meal as an ardent maiden consecrates her thoughts to a love-poem which she will write in her album in honor of her beloved. Truly there

are fools who in the sublimity of their folly wish to appear indifferent to such earthly pleasures, declaring that they are necessary evils, most uncomfortable bodily craving, and nothing more. They are fools who do not understand that eating and drinking is an art, a science, the soul of the soul, the compass of thought and feeling. Dear Balby, order us a costly meal. I wish to be gay and free, light-minded and merry-hearted to-day. In order to promote this we must, before all other things, take care of these earthly bodies and not oppress them with common food."

"We will give them, I hope, the sublimest nourishment which the soil of Holland produces," said Balby, laughing. "You are not aware, M. Frederick Zoller, that we are now in a hotel whose hostess is worshipped, almost glorified, by the good Hollanders."

"And is it this sublime piece of flesh which you propose to place before me?" said the king, with assumed horror. "Will you satisfy the soul of my soul with this Holland beauty? I do not share the enthusiasm of the Hollanders. I shall not worship this woman. I shall find her coarse, old, and ugly."

"But listen, Zoller. These good Dutchmen worship her not because of her perishable beauty, but because of a famous pie which she alone in Amsterdam knows how to make."

"Ah, that is better. I begin now to appreciate the Dutchmen, and if the pie is good, I will worship at the same shrine. Did you not remark, brother Henry, that while you stood carried away by your enthusiasm before Rembrandt's picture of the 'Night Watch' —a picture which it grieves me to say I cannot obtain," sighed the king—"these proud Hollanders call it one of their national treasures, and will not sell it—well, did you not see that I was conversing zealously with three or four of those thick, *rubicund*, comfortable-looking mynheers? No doubt you thought we were rapturously discussing the glorious paintings before which we stood, and for this the good Hollanders were rolling their eyes in ecstasy. No, sir; no, sir. We spoke of a pie! They recognized me as a stranger, asked me from whence I came, where we lodged, etc., etc. And when I mentioned the Black Raven, they went off into ecstatic raptures over the venison pasty of Madame von Blaken. They then went on to relate that Madame Blaken was renowned throughout all Holland because of this venison pasty of which she alone had the recipe, and which she prepared always alone and with closed doors. Her portrait is to be seen in all the shop windows, and all the stadtholders dine once a month in the Black Raven to enjoy this pie. Neither through prayers nor entreaties, commands, or threatenings, has Madame Blaken been induced to give up her recipe or even to go to the castle and prepare the pasty. She declares that this is

the richest possession of the Black Raven, and all who would be so happy as to enjoy it must partake of it at her table. Balby! Balby! hasten my good fellow, and command the venison pastry," said Frederick, eagerly. "Ah! what bliss to lodge in the Black Raven! Waiter, I say! fly to this exalted woman!"

Balby rushed out to seek the hostess and have himself announced.

Madame Blaken received him in her boudoir, to which she had withdrawn to rest a little after the labors of the day. These labors were ever a victory and added to her fame. There was no better table prepared in Holland than that of the Black Raven. She was in full toilet, having just left the dinner table where she had presided at the *table d'hôte* as lady of the house, and received with dignity the praise of her guests. These encomiums still resounded in her ears, and she reclined upon the divan and listened to their pleasing echo. The door opened and the head waiter announced Mr. Zoller. The countenance of Madame Blaken was dark, and she was upon the point of declining to receive him, but it was too late; the daring Zoller had had the boldness to enter just behind the waiter, and he was now making his most reverential bow to the lady. Madame Blaken returned this greeting with a slight nod of the head, and she regarded the stranger in his cheap and simple toilet with a rather contemptuous smile. She thought to herself that this ordinary man had surely made a mistake in entering her hotel. Neither his rank, fortune, nor celebrity could justify his lodging at the Black Raven. She was resolved to reprove her head waiter for allowing such plain and poor people to enter the best hotel in Amsterdam.

"Sir," said she, in a cold and cutting tone, "you come without doubt to excuse your brother and yourself for not having appeared to-day at my *table d'hôte*. You certainly know that politeness requires that you should dine in the hotel where you lodge. Do not distress yourself, however, sir. I do not feel offended now that I have seen you. I understand fully why you did not dine with me, but sought your modest meal elsewhere. The *table d'hôte* in the Black Raven is the most expensive in Amsterdam, and only wealthy people put their feet under my table and enjoy my dishes."

While she thus spoke, her glance wandered searchingly over Balby, who did not seem to remark it, or to comprehend her significant words.

"Madame," said he, "allow me to remark that we have not dined. My brother, whose will is always mine, prefers taking his dinner in his own apartment, where he has more quiet comfort and can better enjoy your rare viands. He never dines at a *table d'hôte*. In every direction he has heard of your wonderful pie, and I come in his

name to ask that you will be so good as to prepare one for his dinner to-day."

Madame Blaken laughed aloud. "Truly said; that is not a bad idea of your brother's. My pasty is celebrated throughout all Holland, and I have generally one ready in case a rich or renowned guest should desire it. But this pie is not for every man!"

"My brother wants it for himself—himself alone," said Balby, decisively. Even the proud hostess felt his tone imposing.

"Sir," said she, after a short pause, "forgive me if I speak plainly to you. You wish to eat one of my renowned pies, and to have it served in a private room, as the General Stadtholder and other high potentates are accustomed to do. Well, I have this morning a pasty made with truffles and Chinese birds'-nests, but you cannot have it! To be frank, it is enormously dear, and I think neither your brother nor yourself could pay for it!"

And now it was Balby's turn to laugh aloud, and he did so with the free, unembarrassed gayety of a man who is sure of his position, and is neither confused nor offended.

Madame Blaken was somewhat provoked by this unrestrained merriment. "You laugh, sir, but I have good reason for supposing you to be poor and unknown. You came covered with dust and on foot to my hotel, accompanied by one servant carrying a small carpet-bag. You have neither equipage, retinue, nor baggage. You receive no visits; and, as it appears, make none. You are always dressed in your simple, modest, rather forlorn-looking brown coats. You have never taken a dinner here, but pass the day abroad, and when you return in the evening you ask for a cup of tea and a few slices of bread and butter. Rich people do not travel in this style, and I therefore have the right to ask if you can afford to pay for my pasty? I do not know who or what you are, nor your brother's position in the world."

"Oh," cried Balby, who was highly amused by the candor of the hostess, "my brother has a most distinguished position, I assure you —his fame resounds throughout Germany."

"Bah!" said Madame Blaken, shrugging her shoulders; "the name is entirely unknown to us. Pray, what is your brother, and for what is he celebrated?"

"For his flute," answered Balby, with solemn gravity.

Madame Blaken rose and glanced scornfully at Balby. "Are you making sport of me, sir?" said she, threateningly.

"Not in the least, madame; I am telling you an important truth. My brother is a renowned *virtuoso.*"

"A *virtuoso?*" repeated the hostess; "I do not understand the word. Pray, what is a *virtuoso?*"

"A *virtuoso*, madame, is a musician who makes such music as no other man can make. He gives concerts, and sells the tickets for an enormous price, and the world rushes to hear his music. I assure you, madame, my brother can play so enchantingly that those who hear his flute are forced to dance in spite of themselves. He receives large sums of gold, and if he gives a concert here you will see that all your distinguished people will flock to hear him. You can set your pasty before him without fear—he is able to pay richly for it."

Madame Blaken rose without a word and advanced toward the door. "Come, sir, come. I am going to your brother." Without waiting for an answer, she stepped through the corridor and tapped lightly at the stranger's door. She was on the point of opening it, but Balby caught her hand hastily.

"Madame," said he, "allow me to enter and inquire if you can be received." He wished to draw her back from the door, but the hostess of the Black Raven was not the woman to be withdrawn.

"You wish to ask if I can enter?" repeated she. "I may well claim that privilege in my own house."

With a determined hand she knocked once more upon the door, opened it immediately and entered, followed by Balby, who by signs endeavored to explain and beg pardon for the intrusion.

Frederick did not regard him, his blue eyes were fixed upon the woman who, with laughing good-humor, stepped up to him and held out both of her large, course hands in greeting.

"Sir, I come to convince myself if what your brother said was true."

"Well, madame, what has my brother said?"

"He declares that you can whistle splendidly, and all the world is forced to dance after your music."

"I said play the flute, madame! I said play the flute!" cried Balby, horrified.

"Well, flute or whistle," said Madame Blaken, proudly, "it's the same thing. Be so good, sir, as to whistle me something; I will then decide as to the pasty."

The king looked at Balby curiously.

"Will you have the goodness, brother, to explain madame's meaning, and what she requires of me?"

"Allow me to explain myself," said the hostess. "This gentleman came and ordered a rich pie for you; this pasty has given celebrity to my house. It is true I have one prepared, but I would not send it to you. Would you know why? This is an enormously expensive dish, and I have no reason to believe that you are in a condition to pay for it. I said this to your brother, and I might

with truth have told him that I regretted to see him in my hotel—not that you are in yourselves objectionable, on the contrary, you appear to me to be harmless and amiable men, but because of your purses. I fear that you do not know the charges of first-class hotels, and will be amazed at your bill. Your brother, however, assures me that you can afford to pay for all you order; that you make a great deal of money; that you are a *virtuoso*, give concerts, and sell tickets at the highest price. Now, I will convince myself if you are a great musician and can support yourself. Whistle me something, and I will decide as to the pie."

The king listened to all this with suppressed merriment, and gave Balby a significant look.

"Bring my flute, brother; I will convince madame that I am indeed a *virtuoso*."

"Let us hear," said Madame Blaken, seating herself upon the sofa from which the king had just arisen.

Frederick made, with indescribable solemnity, a profound bow to the hostess. He placed the flute to his lips and began to play, but not in his accustomed masterly style—not in those mild, floating melodies, those solemn sacred, and exalted strains which it was his custom to draw from his beloved flute. He played a gay and brilliant solo, full of double trills and rhapsodies; it was an astounding medley, which seemed to make a triumphal march over the instrument, overcoming all difficulties. But those soft tones which touched the soul and roused to noble thoughts were wanting; in truth, the melody failed, the music was wanting.

Madame Blaken listened with ever-increasing rapture to this wondrous exercise; these trills, springing from octave to octave, drew forth her loudest applause; she trembled with ecstasy, and as the king closed with a brilliant cadence, she clapped her hands and shouted enthusiastically. She stood up respectfully before the *artiste* in the simple brown coat, and bowing low, said earnestly:

"Your brother was right, you can surely earn much money by your whistle. You whistle as clearly as my mocking-bird. You shall have the pie—I go to order it at once," and she hastened from the room.

"Well," said the king, laughing, "this was a charming scene, and I thank you for it, brother Henry. It is a proud and happy feeling to know that you can stand upon your feet, or walk alone; in other words, that you can earn a support. Now, if the sun of Prussia sets, I shall not hunger, for I can earn my bread; Madame Blaken assures me of it. But, Henry, did I not play eminently?"

"That was the most glittering, dazzling piece for a concert which I ever heard," said Balby, "and Mr. Zoller may well be proud of it,

but I counsel him not to play it before the King of Prussia; he would, in his jealousy, declare it was not music, nothing but sound, and signifying nothing."

"Bravo, my friend," said Frederick, taking his friend's hand; "yes, he would say that. Mr. Zoller played like a true *virtuoso*, that is to say, without intellect and without soul; he did not make music, only artistic tones. But here comes the pasty, and I shall relish it wondrous well. It is the first meat I have ever earned with my flute. Let us eat, brother Henry."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING WITHOUT SHOES.

THE pie was really worthy of its reputation, and the king enjoyed it highly. He was gay and talkative, and amused himself in recalling the varied adventures of the past five days.

"They will soon be *tempi passati*, these *giorni felice*," he said, sighing. "To-day is the last day of our freedom and happiness; to-morrow we must take up our yoke, and exchange our simple brown coats for dashing uniforms."

"I know one, at least, who is rejoicing," said Balby, laughing, "the unhappy Deesen, who has just sworn most solemnly that he would throw himself in the river if he had to play much longer the part of a servant without livery—a servant of two unknown musicians; and he told me, with tears in his eyes, that not a respectable man in the house would speak to him; that the pretty maids would not even listen to his soft sighs and tender words."

"Dress makes the man," said the king, laughing; "if Deesen wore his cabinet-hussar livery these proud beauties who now despise, would smile insidiously. How strangely the world is constituted! But let us enjoy our freedom while we may. We still have some collections of paintings to examine—here are some splendid pictures of Rembrandt and Rubens to be sold. Then, last of all, I have an important piece of business to transact with the great banker, Witte, on whom I have a draft. You know that Madame Blaken is expensive, and the picture-dealers will not trust our honest faces; we must show them hard cash."

"Does your—— Shall I not go to the bankers and draw the money?" said Balby.

"Oh no, I find it pleasant to serve myself, to be my own master and servant at the same time. Allow me this rare pleasure for a few hours longer, Balby."

The king took his friend's arm, and recommenced his search for paintings and treasures to adorn his gallery at Sans-Souci. Everywhere he was received kindly and respectfully, for all recognized them as purchasers, and not idle sight-seers. The dealers appreciated the difference between idle enthusiasm and well-filled purses.

The king understood this well, and on leaving the house of the last rich merchant he breathed more freely, and said:

"I am glad that is over. The rudeness of the postmaster at Gravo pleased me better than the civilities of these people. Come, Balby, we have bought pictures enough; now we will only admire them, enjoy without appropriating them. The rich banker, Abramson, is said to have a beautiful collection; we will examine them, and then have our draft cashed."

The banker's splendid house was soon found, and the brothers entered the house boldly, and demanded of the richly-dressed, liveried servant to be conducted to the gallery.

"This is not the regular day," said the servant, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, as he measured the two strangers.

"Not the day! What day?" asked the king, sharply.

"Not the day of general exhibition. You must wait until next Tuesday."

"Impossible, we leave to-morrow. Go to your master and tell him two strangers wish to see his gallery, and beg it may be opened for them."

There was something so haughty and irresistible in the stranger's manner, that the servant not daring to refuse, and still astonished at his own compliance, went to inform his master of the request. He returned in a few moments, and announced that his master would come himself to receive them.

The door opened immediately, and Mr. Abramson stepped into the hall; his face, bright and friendly, darkened when his black eyes fell upon the two strangers standing in the hall.

"You desired to speak to me," he said, in the arrogant tone that the rich Jews are accustomed to use when speaking to unknown and poor people. "What is your wish, sirs?"

The king's brow darkened, and he looked angrily at the supercilious man of fortune, who was standing opposite him, with his head proudly thrown back, and his hands in his pockets. But Frederick's countenance soon cleared, and he said, with perfect composure:

"We wish you to show us your picture-gallery, sir."

The tone in which he spoke was less pleading than commanding, and roused the anger of the easily-enraged *parvenu*.

"Sir, I have a picture-gallery, arranged for my own pleasure,

and paid for with my own money. I am very willing to show it to all who have not the money to purchase pictures for themselves; and to satisfy the curiosity of strangers, I have set aside a day in each week on which to exhibit my gallery."

"You mean, then, sir, that you will not allow us to enter your museum?" said the king, smilingly, and laying his hand at the same time softly on Balby's arm, to prevent him from speaking.

"I mean that my museum is closed, and—"

A carriage rolled thunderingly to the door; the outer doors of the hall were hastily opened, a liveried servant entered, and stepping immediately to Mr. Abramson, he said:

"Lord Middlestone, of London, asks the honor of seeing your gallery."

The countenance of the Jewish banker beamed with delight.

"Will his excellency have the graciousness to enter? I consider it an honor to show him my poor treasures. My gallery is closed to-day, but for Lord Middlestone, I will open it gladly."

His contemptuous glance met the two poor musicians, who had stepped aside, and were silent witnesses of this scene.

The outer doors of the court were opened noisily, and a small, shrivelled human form, assisted by two servants, staggered into the hall. It was an old man, wrapped in furs; this was his excellency Lord Middlestone. Mr. Abramson met him with a profound bow, and sprang forward to the door that led to the gallery.

Every eye was fixed upon this sad picture of earthly pomp and greatness; all felt the honor to the house of Mr. Abramson. Lord Middlestone, the ambassador of the King of England, desired to see his collection. This was an acknowledgment of merit that delighted the heart of the banker, and added a new splendor to his house.

While the door was being opened to admit his lordship, Balby and the king left the house unnoticed.

The king was angry, and walked silently along for a time; suddenly remaining standing, he gazed steadily at Balby, and broke out into a loud, merry laugh, that startled the passers-by, and made them look wonderingly after him.

"Balby, my friend," he said, still laughing, "I will tell you something amusing. Never in my life did I feel so humble and ashamed as when his excellency entered the gallery so triumphantly, and we slipped away so quietly from the house. Truly, I was fool enough to be angry at first, but I now feel that the scene was irresistibly comic. Oh! oh, Balby! do laugh with me. Think of us, who imagine ourselves to be such splendidly handsome men, being shown the door, and that horrid shrunken, diseased old man being

received with such consideration! He smelt like a salve-box, we are odorous with ambrosia; but all in vain, Abramson preferred the salve-box."

"Abramson's olfactories are not those of a courtier," said Balby, "or he would have fainted at the odor of royalty. But truly, this Mr. Abramson is a disgraceful person, and I beg your majesty to avenge Mr. Zoller."

"I shall do so. He deserves punishment; he has insulted me as a man; the king will punish him." *

"And now we will have our check cashed by Mr. Witte. I bet he will not dismiss us so curtly, for my draft is for ten thousand crowns, and he will be respectful—if not to us, to our money."

The worthy and prosperous Madame Witte had just finished dusting and cleaning her state apartment, and was giving it a last artistic survey. She smiled contentedly, and acknowledged that there was nothing more to be done. The mirrors and windows were of transparent brightness—no dust was seen on the silk furniture or the costly ornaments—it was perfect. With a sad sigh Madame Witte left the room and locked the door with almost a feeling of regret. She must deny herself for the next few days her favorite occupation—there was nothing more to dust or clean in the apartment and only in this room was her field of operation—only here did her husband allow her to play the servant. With this exception he required of her to be the lady of the house—the noble wife of the rich banker—and this was a *rôle* that pleased the good woman but little. She locked the door with a sigh and drew on her shoes, which she was accustomed always to leave in the hall before entering her state apartment, then stepped carefully on the border of the carpet that covered the hall to another door. At this moment violent ringing was heard at the front door. Madame Witte moved quickly forward to follow the bent of her womanly curiosity and see who desired admittance at this unusual hour. Two strangers had already entered the hall and desired to see the banker.

"Mr. Witte is not at home, and if your business is not too pressing, call again early to-morrow morning."

"But my business is pressing," said Frederick Zoller, hastily; "I must speak with Mr. Witte to-day."

"Can they wish to borrow money from him?" thought Madame Witte, who saw the two strangers through the half-opened door. "To borrow, or to ask credit, I am sure that is their business."

* The king kept his word. The Jew heard afterward that it was the king whom he had treated so disrespectfully, and he could never obtain his forgiveness. He was not allowed to negotiate with the Prussian government or banks, and was thus bitterly punished for his misconduct.

"May I ask the nature of your business?" said the servant. "In order to bring Mr. Witte from the Casino I must know what you wish of him."

"I desire to have a draft of ten thousand crowns cashed," said Frederick Zoller, sharply.

The door was opened hastily, and Madame Witte stepped forward to greet the stranger and his companion. "Have the kindness, gentlemen, to step in and await my husband; he will be here in a quarter of an hour. Go, Andres, for Mr. Witte." Andres ran off, and Madame Witte accompanied the strangers through the hall. Arrived at the door of the state apartment, she quickly drew off her shoes, and then remained standing, looking expectantly at the strangers.

"Well, madame," said the king, "shall we await Mr. Witte before this door, or will you show us into the next room?"

"Certainly I will; but I am waiting on you."

"On us? And what do you expect of us?"

"What I have done, sirs—to take your shoes off."

The king laughed aloud. "Can no one, then, enter that room with shoes on?"

"Never, sir. It was a custom of my great-grandfather. He had this house built, and never since then has any one entered it with shoes. Please, therefore, take them off."

Balby hastened to comply with her peremptory command. "Madame, it will suffice you for me to follow this custom of your ancestors—you will spare my brother this ceremony."

"And why?" asked Madame Witte, astonished. "His shoes are no cleaner or finer than yours, or those of other men. Have the kindness to take off your shoes also."

"You are right, madame," said the king, seriously. "We must leave off the old man altogether; therefore, you ask but little in requiring us to take off our shoes before entering your state apartment." He stooped to undo the buckles of his shoes, and when Balby wished to assist him, he resisted. "No, no; you shall not loosen my shoes—you are too worthy for that. Madame Witte might think that I am a very assuming person—that I tyrannize over my brother. There, madame, the buckles are undone, and there lie my shoes, and now we are ready to enter your state apartment."

Madame Witte opened the door with cold gravity, and allowed them to pass. "To-morrow I can dust again," she said, gleefully, "for the strangers' clothes are very dirty.

In the mean time, the two strangers awaited the arrival of Mr. Witte. The king enjoyed his comic situation immensely. Balby

looked anxiously at the bare feet of the king, and said he should never have submitted to Madame Witte's caprice. The floor was cold, and the king might be taken ill.

"Oh, no," said Frederick, "I do not get sick so easily—my system can stand severer hardships. We should be thankful that we have come off so cheaply, for a rich banker like Witte in Amsterdam, is equal to the Pope in Rome; and I do not think taking off our shoes is paying too dearly to see the pope of Holland. Just think what King Henry IV. had to lay aside before he could see the Pope of Rome—not only his shoes and stockings and a few other articles, but his royalty and majesty. Madame Witte is really forbearing not to require the same costume of us."

The door behind them was opened hastily, and the banker Witte stepped in. He advanced to meet them with a quiet smile, but suddenly checked himself, and gazed with terror at the king.

"My God! his majesty the King of Prussia!" he stammered. "Oh! your majesty! what an undeserved favor you are doing my poor house in honoring it with your presence!"

"You know me, then?" said the king, smiling. "Well, I beg you may not betray my incognito, and cash for Frederick Zoller this draft of ten thousand crowns."

He stepped forward to hand the banker the draft. Mr. Witte uttered a cry of horror, and, wringing his hands, fell upon his knees. He had just seen that the king was barefooted.

"Oh! your majesty! Mercy! mercy!" he pleaded. "Pardon my unhappy wife, who could not dream of the crime she was committing. Why did your majesty consent to her insane demand? Why did you not peremptorily refuse to take off your shoes?"

"Why? Well, *ma foi*, because I wished to spare the King of Prussia a humiliation. I believe Madame Witte would rather have thrown me out of the house than allowed me to enter this sacred room with my shoes on."

"No, your majesty, no. She would—"

At this moment the door opened, and Madame Witte, drawn by the loud voice of her husband, entered the room.

"Wife!" he cried, rising, "come forward; fall on your knees and plead for forgiveness."

"What have I done?" she asked, wonderingly.

"You compelled this gentleman to take off his shoes at the door."

"Well, and what of that?"

"Well," said Mr. Witte, solemnly, as he laid his arm upon his wife's shoulder and tried to force her to her knees, "this is his majesty the King of Prussia!"

But the all-important words had not the expected effect. Ma-

dame Witte remained quietly standing, and looked first upon her own bare feet and then curiously at the king.

"Beg the king's pardon for your most unseemly conduct," said Witte.

"Why was it unseemly?" asked his better-half. "Do I not take off my shoes every time I enter this room? The room is mine, and does not belong to the King of Prussia."

Witte raised his hands above his head in despair. The king laughed loudly and heartily.

"You see I was right, sir," he said. "Only obedience could spare the King of Prussia a humiliation.* But let us go to your business-room and arrange our moneyed affairs. There, madame, I suppose you will allow me to put on my shoes."

Without a word, Mr. Witte rushed from the room for the king's shoes, and hastened to put them, not before the king, but before the door that led into his counting room.

With a gay smile, the king stepped along the border of the carpet to his shoes, and let Balby put them on for him.

"Madame," he said, "I see that you are really mistress in your own house, and that you are obeyed, not from force, but from instinct. God preserve you your strong will and your good husband!"

"Now," said the king, after they had received the money and returned to the hotel, "we must make all our arrangements to return to-morrow morning early—our incognito is over! Mr. Witte promised not to betray us, but his wife is not to be trusted; therefore, by to-morrow morning, the world will know that the King of Prussia is in Amsterdam. Happily, Mr. Witte does not know where I am stopping. I hope to be undisturbed to-day, but by to-morrow this will be impossible."

The king prophesied aright: Madame Witte was zealously engaged in telling her friends the important news that the King of Prussia had visited her husband, and was now in Amsterdam.

The news rolled like an avalanche from house to house, from street to street, and even reached the mayor's door, who, in spite of the lateness of the hour, called a meeting of the magistrates, and sent policemen to all the hotels to demand a list of the strangers who had arrived during the last few days. In order to greet the king, they must first find him.

Early the next morning, a simple *calèche*, with two horses, stood at the hotel of the "Black Raven." The brothers Zoller were about to leave Amsterdam, and, to Madame Blaken's astonishment, they not only paid their bill without murmuring, but left a rich *douceur*

* The king's own words. See Nicolai's "Anecdotes of Frederick the Great," collection v., p. 31.

for the servants. The hostess stepped to the door to bid them farewell, and nodded kindly as they came down the steps. Their servant followed with the little carpet-bag and the two music-cases.

When Deesen became aware of the presence of the hostess, and the two head-servants, he advanced near to the king.

"Your majesty, may I now speak?" he murmured.

"Not yet," said he king, smiling, "wait until we are in the carriage."

He descended the steps, with a friendly nod to the hostess. Balby and himself left the house.

"See, my friend, how truly I prophesied," he said, as he pointed down the street; "let us get in quickly, it is high time to be off; see the crowd advancing."

Frederick was right; from the end of the street there came a long procession of men, headed by the two mayors, dressed in black robes, trimmed with broad red bands. They were followed by the senators, clothed in the same manner. A great number of the rich aristocrats of the city accompanied them.

Madame Blaken had stepped from the house, and was looking curiously at the approaching crowd, and while she and her maids were wondering what this could mean, the two Mr. Zollers entered the carriage, and their servant had mounted the box.

"May I speak now?" said Deesen, turning to the king.

"Yes, speak," said the king, "but quickly, or the crowd will take your secret from you."

"Hostess!" cried Deesen, from the box, "do you know what that crowd means?"

"No," she said, superciliously."

"I will explain; listen, madame. The magistrates are coming to greet the King of Prussia!"

"The King of Prussia!" shrieked the hostess. "Where is the King of Prussia?"

"Here!" cried Deesen, with a malicious grin, as he pointed to the king, "and I am his majesty's cabinet-hussar! Forward, postilion!—quick, forward!"

The postilion whipped his horses, and the carriage dashed by the mayors and senators, who were marching to greet the King of Prussia. They never dreamed that he had just passed mischievously by them.

Two days later, the king and his companions stood on the Prussian border, on the spot where, in the beginning of their journey, the king had written the words "majesty" and "sire."

"Look!" he said, pointing to the ground, "the two fatal words have not vanished away; the sun has hardened the ground, and they

are still legible. I must lift them from the sand, and wear them henceforth and forever. Give me your hand, Balby; the poor musician, Frederick Zoller, will bid farewell to his friend, and not only to you, Balby, but farewell also to my youth. This is my last youthful adventure. Now, I shall grow old and cold gracefully. One thing I wish to say before I resume my royalty; confidentially, I am not entirely displeased with the change. It seems to me difficult to fill the *rôle* of a common man. Men do not seem to love and trust each other fully; a man avenges himself on an innocent party for the wrongs another has committed. Besides, I do not rightly understand the politenesses of common life, and, therefore, received many reproaches. I believe, on the whole, it is easier to bestow than to receive them. Therefore, I take up my crown willingly."

"Will your majesty allow me a word?" said Deesen, stepping forward.

"Speak, Deesen."

"I thank Mr. Zoller for saving my life. As true as God lives, I should have stifled with rage if I had not told that haughty Hollander who Mr. Zoller was and who I was."

"Now, forward! Farewell, Frederick Zoller! Now I am on Prussian soil, the hour of thoughtless happiness is passed. I fear, Balby, that the solemn duties of life will soon take possession of us. So be it! I accept my destiny—I am again Frederick of Hohenzollern!"

"And I have the honor to be the first to greet your majesty on your own domain," said Balby, as he bowed profoundly before the king.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNHAPPY NEWS.

THE Princess Amelia was alone in her room. She was stretched upon a sofa, lost in deep thought; her eyes were raised to heaven, and her lips trembled; from time to time they murmured a word of complaint or of entreaty.

Amelia was ill. She had been ill since that unhappy day in which she intentionally destroyed her beauty to save herself from a hated marriage.* Her eyes had never recovered their glance or early fire; they were always inflamed and veiled by tears. Her voice had lost its metallic ring and youthful freshness; it sounded from her aching and hollow chest like sighs from a lonely grave. Severe pain from time to time tortured her whole body, and contracted her limbs with agonizing cramps. She had the appearance of a woman of sixty years of age, who was tottering to the grave.

In this crushed and trembling body dwelt a strong, powerful, healthy soul; this shrunken, contracted bosom was animated by a youthful, ardent, passionate heart. This heart had consecrated itself to the love of its early years with an obstinate and feverish power.

In wild defiance against her fate, Amelia had sworn never to yield, never to break faith; to bear all, to suffer all for her love, and to press onward with unshaken resignation but never-failing courage through the storms and agonies of a desolate, misunderstood, and wretched existence. She was a martyr to her birth and her love; she accepted this martyrdom with defiant self-reliance and joyful resignation.

Years had passed since she had seen Trenck, but she loved him still! She knew he had not guarded the faith they had mutually sworn with the constancy that she had religiously maintained; but she loved him still! She had solemnly sworn to her brother to give up the foolish and fantastic wish of becoming the wife of Trenck; but she loved him still! She might not live for him, but she would

* See "Berlin and Sans-Souci"

suffer for him; she could not give him her hand, but she could consecrate thought and soul to him. In imagination she was his, only his; he had a holy, an imperishable right to her. Had she not sworn, in the presence of God, to be his through life down to the borders of the grave? Truly, no priest had blessed them; God had been their priest, and had united them. There had been no mortal witness to their solemn oaths, but the pure stars were present—with their sparkling, loving eyes they had looked down and listened to the vows she had exchanged with Trenck. She was therefore his—his eternally! He had a sacred claim upon her constancy, her love, her forbearance, and her forgiveness. If Trenck had wandered from his faith, she dared not follow his example; she must be ever ready to listen to his call, and give him the aid he required.

Amelia's love was her religion, her life's strength, her life's object; it was a talisman to protect and give strength in time of need. She would have died without it; she lived and struggled with her grief only for his sake.

This was a wretched, joyless existence—a never-ending martyrdom, a never-ceasing contest. Amelia stood alone and unloved in her family, feared and avoided by all the merry, thoughtless, pleasure seeking circle. In her sad presence they shuddered involuntarily and felt chilled, as by a blast from the grave. She was an object of distrust and weariness to her companions and servants, an object of love and frank affection to no one.

Mademoiselle Ernestine von Haak had alone remained true to her; but she had married, and gone far away with her husband. Princess Amelia was now alone; there was no one to whom she could express her sorrow and her fears; no one who understood her suppressed agony, or who spoke one word of consolation or sympathy to her broken heart.

She was alone in the world. and the consciousness of this steeled her strength, and made an impenetrable shield for her wearied soul. She gave herself up entirely to her thoughts and dreams. She lived a strange, enchanted, double life and twofold existence. Outwardly, she was old, crushed, ill; her interior life was young, fresh, glowing, and energetic, endowed with unshaken power, and tempered in the fire of her great grief. Amelia lay upon the divan and looked dreamily toward heaven. A strange and unaccountable presentiment was upon her; she trembled with mysterious forebodings. She had always felt thus when any new misfortunes were about to befall Trenck. It seemed as if her soul was bound to his, and by means of an electric current she felt the blow in the same moment that it fell upon him.

The princess believed in these presentiments. She had faith in

dreams and prophecies, as do all those unhappy beings to whom fate has denied real happiness, and who seek wildly in fantastic visions for compensation. She loved, therefore, to look into the future through fortune-tellers and dark oracles, and thus prepare herself for the sad events which lay before her. The day before, the renowned astrologer Pfannenstein had warned her of approaching peril; he declared that a cloud of tears was in the act of bursting upon her! Princess Amelia believed in his words, and waited with a bold, resolved spirit for the breaking of the cloud, whose gray veil she already felt to be round about her.

These sad thoughts were interrupted by a light knock upon the door, and her maid entered and announced that the master of ceremonies, Baron Pöllnitz, craved an audience.

Amelia shuddered, but roused herself quickly. "Let him enter!" she said, hastily. The short moment of expectation seemed an eternity of anguish. She pressed her hands upon her heart, to still its stormy beatings; she looked with staring, wide-opened eyes toward the door through which Pöllnitz must enter, and she shuddered as she looked upon the ever-smiling, immovable face of the courtier, who now entered her boudoir, with Mademoiselle von Marwitz at his side.

"Do you know, Pöllnitz," said she, in a rough, imperious tone—"do you know I believe your face is not flesh and blood, but hewn from stone; or, at least, one day it was petrified? Perhaps the fatal hour struck one day, just as you were laughing over some of your villanies, and your smile was turned to stone as a judgment. I shall know this look as long as I live; it is ever most clearly marked upon your visage, when you have some misfortune to announce."

"Then this stony smile must have but little expression to-day, for I do not come as a messenger of evil tidings; but if your royal highness will allow me to say so, as a sort of *postillon d'amour.*"

Amelia shrank back for a moment, gave one glance toward Mademoiselle von Marwitz, whom she knew full well to be the watchful spy of her mother, and whose daily duty it was to relate to the queen-mother every thing which took place in the apartment of the princess. She knew that every word and look of Pöllnitz was examined with the strictest attention.

Pöllnitz, however, spoke on with cool self-possession:

"You look astonished, princess; it perhaps appears to you that this impassive face is little suited to the *rôle* of *postillon d'amour*, and yet that is my position, and I ask your highness's permission to make known my errand."

"I refuse your request," said Amelia, roughly; "I have nothing to do with Love, and find his godship as old and dull as the messen-

ger he has sent me. Go back, then, to your blind god, and tell him that my ears are deaf to his love greeting, and the screeching of the raven is more melodious than the tenderest words a Pöllnitz can utter."

The princess said this in her most repulsive tone. She was accustomed to shield herself in this rude manner from all approach or contact, and, indeed, she attained her object. She was feared and avoided. Her witty *bon mots* and stinging jests were repeated and merrily laughed over, but the world knew that she scattered her sarcasms far and wide, in order to secure her isolation; to banish every one from her presence, so that none might hear her sighs, or read her sad history in her countenance.

"And yet, princess, I must still implore a hearing," said he, with imperturbable good-humor; "if my voice is rough as the raven's, your royal highness must feed me with sugar, and it will become soft and tender as an innocent maiden's."

"I think a few ducats would be better for your case," said Amelia; "a Pöllnitz is not to be won with sweets, but for gold he would follow the devil to the lower regions."

"You are right, princess; I do not wish to go to heaven, but below; there I am certain to find the best and most interesting society. The genial people are all born devils, and your highness has ever confessed that I am genial. Then let it be so! I will accept the ducats which your royal highness think good for me, and now allow me to discharge my duty. I come as the messenger of Prince Henry. He sends his heart-felt greetings to his royal sister, and begs that she will do him the honor to attend a *fête* at Rheinsberg, which will take place in eight days."

"Has the master of ceremonies of the king become the *fourrier* of Prince Henry?" said Amelia.

"No, princess; I occasionally and accidentally perform the function of a *fourrier*. This invitation was not my principal object today."

"I knew it," said Amelia, ironically. "My brother Henry does not love me well enough to invite me to this *fête*, if he had not some other object to attain. Well, what does Prince Henry wish?"

"A small favor, your royal highness; he wishes, on the birthday of his wife, to have Voltaire's '*Rome Sauvée*' given by the French tragedians. Some years since your highness had a great triumph in this piece. The prince remembers that Voltaire prepared the *rôle* of Aurelia especially for you, with changes and additions, and he entreats you, through me, the temporary *Directeur des spectacles de Rheinsberg*, to lend him this *rôle* for the use of his performer."

"Why does not my brother rather entreat me to take this part myself?" said Amelia, in cruel mockery over herself. "It appears to me I could look the part of Aurelia, and my soft, flute-like voice would make a powerful impression upon the public. It is cruel of Prince Henry to demand this *rôle* of me; it might be inferred that he thought I had become old and ugly."

"Not so, your highness; the tragedy is to be performed on this occasion by public actors, and not by amateurs."

"You are right," said Amelia, suddenly becoming grave; "at that time we were amateurs, lovers of the drama; our dreams are over—we live in realities now."

"Mademoiselle von Marwitz, have the goodness to bring the manuscript my brother wishes; it is partly written by Voltaire's own hand. You will find it in the bureau in my dressing-room."

Mademoiselle Marwitz withdrew to get the manuscript; as she left the room, she looked back suspiciously at Pöllnitz and, as if by accident, left the door open which led to the dressing-room.

Mademoiselle Marwitz had scarcely disappeared, before Pöllnitz sprang forward, with youthful agility, and closed the door.

"Princess, this commission of Prince Henry's was only a pretext. I took this order from the princess's *maître d'hôtel* in order to approach your highness unnoticed, and to get rid of the watchful eyes of your Marwitz. Now listen well; Weingarten, the Austrian secretary of Legation, was with me to-day."

"Ah, Weingarten," murmured the princess, tremblingly; "he gave you a letter for me; quick, quick, give it to me."

"No, he gave me no letter; it appears that he, who formerly sent letters, is no longer in the condition to do so."

"He is dead!" cried Amelia with horror, and sank back as if struck by lightning.

"No, princess, he is not dead, but in great danger. It appears that Weingarten is in great need of money; for a hundred louis d'or, which I promised him, he confided to me that Trenck's enemies had excited the suspicions of the king against him, and declared that Trenck had designs against the life of Frederick."

"The miserable liars and slanderers!" cried Amelia, contemptuously.

"The king, as it appears, believes in these charges; he has written to his resident minister to demand of the senate of Dantzic the delivery of Trenck."

"Trenck is not in Dantzic, but in Vienna."

"He is in Dantzic—or, rather, he was there."

"And now?"

"Now," said Pöllnitz, solemnly, "he is on the way to Königs-

berg; from that point he will be transported to some other fortress; first, however, he will be brought to Berlin."

The unhappy princess uttered a shriek, which sounded like a wild death-cry. "He is, then, a prisoner?"

"Yes; but, on his way to prison, so long as he does not cross the threshold of the fortress, it is possible to deliver him. Weingarten, who, it appears to me, is much devoted to your highness, has drawn for me the plan of the route Trenck is to take. Here it is." He handed the princess a small piece of paper, which she seized with trembling hands, and read hastily.

"He comes through Cöslin," said she, joyfully; "that gives a chance of safety in Cöslin! The Duke of Wurtemberg, the friend of my youthful days, is in Cöslin; he will assist me. Pöllnitz, quick, quick, find me a courier who will carry a letter to the duke for me without delay."

"That will be difficult, if not impossible," said Pöllnitz, thoughtfully.

Amelia sprang from her seat; her eyes had the old fire, her features their youthful expression and elasticity.

The power and ardor of her soul overcame the weakness of her body; it found energy and strength.

"Well, then," said she, decisively, and even her voice was firm and soft, "I will go myself; and woe to him who dares withhold me! I have been ordered to take sea-baths. I will go this hour to Cöslin for that purpose! but no, no, I cannot travel so rashly. Pöllnitz, you must find me a courier."

"I will try," said Pöllnitz. "One can buy all the glories of this world for gold; and, I think, your highness will not regard a few louis d'or, more or less."

"Find me a messenger, and I will pay every hour of his journey with a gold piece."

"I will send my own servant; in half an hour he shall be ready."

"God be thanked! it will, then, be possible to save him. Let me write this letter at once, and hasten your messenger. Let him fly as if he had wings—as if the wild winds of heaven bore him onward. The sooner he brings me the answer of the duke, the greater shall be his reward. Oh, I will reward him as if I were a rich queen, and not a poor, forsaken, sorrowful princess."

"Write, princess, write," cried Pöllnitz, eagerly; "but no, have the goodness to give me the hundred louis d'or before Mademoiselle Marwitz returns. I promised them to Weingarten for his news you can add to them the ducats you were graciously pleased to be stow upon me."

Amelia did not reply; she stepped to the table and wrote a few lines, which she handed to Pöllnitz.

"Take this," said she, almost contemptuously; "it is a draft upon my banker, Orguelin. I thank you for allowing your services to be paid for; it relieves me from all call to gratitude. Serve me faithfully in future, and you shall ever find my hand open and my purse full. And now give me time to write to the duke, and—"

"Princess, I hear Mademoiselle Marwitz returning!"

Amelia left the writing-table hastily, and advanced to the door through which Mademoiselle Marwitz must enter.

"Ah, you are come at last," said she, as the door opened. "I was about to seek you. I feared you could not find the paper."

"It was very difficult to find amongst such a mass of letters and papers," said Mademoiselle Marwitz, whose suspicious glance was now wandering round the room. "I succeeded, however, at last; here is the manuscript, your highness."

The princess took it and examined it carefully. "Ah, I thought so," she said. "A monologue which Voltaire wrote for me, is missing. I gave it to the king, and I see he has not returned it. I think my memory is the only faculty which retains its power. It is my misfortune that I cannot forget! I will test it to-day and try to write this monologue from memory. I must be alone, however. I pray you, mademoiselle, to go into the saloon with Pöllnitz; he can entertain you with the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of our most virtuous court, while I am writing.—And now," said she, when she found herself alone, "may God give me power to reach the heart of the duke, and win him to my purpose!"

With a firm hand she wrote:

"Because you are happy, duke, you will have pity for the wretched. For a few days past, you have had your young and lovely wife at your side, and experienced the pure bliss of a happy union; you will therefore comprehend the despair of those who love as fondly, and can never be united. And now, I would remind you of a day on which it was in my power to obtain for you a great favor from my brother the king. At that time you promised me to return this service tenfold, should it ever be in your power, and you made me promise, if I should ever need assistance, to turn to you alone! My hour has come! I need your help; not for myself! God and death alone can help me. I demand your aid for a man who is chained with me to the galleys. You know him—have mercy upon him! Perhaps he will arrive at your court in the same hour with my letter. Duke, will you be the jailer of the wretched and the powerless, who is imprisoned only because I am the daughter of a king? Are your officers constables? will you allow them to cast

into an eternal prison him for whom I have wept night and day for many long years?

"Oh, my God! my God! you have given wings to the birds of the air; you have given to the horse his fiery speed; you have declared that man is the king of creation; you have marked upon his brow the seal of freedom, and this is his holiest possession. Oh, friend, will you consent that a noble gentleman, who has nothing left but his freedom, shall be unjustly deprived of it! Duke, I call upon you! Be a providence for my unhappy friend, and set him at liberty. And through my whole life long I will bless and honor you! AMELIA."

"If he does not listen to this outcry of my soul," she whispered, as she folded and sealed the letter—"if he has the cruelty to let me plead in vain, then in my death-hour I will curse him, and charge him with being the murderer of my last hope!"

The princess called Pöllnitz, and, with an expressive glance, she handed him the letter.

"Truly, my memory has not failed me," she said to Mademoiselle Marwitz, who entered behind Pöllnitz, and whose sharp eyes were fixed upon the letter in the baron's hand. "I have been able to write the whole monologue. Give this paper to my brother, Pöllnitz; I have added a few friendly lines, and excused myself for declining the invitation. I cannot see this drama."

"Well, it seems to me I have made a lucrative affair of this," said Pöllnitz to himself, as he left the princess. "I promised Weingarten only fifty louis d'or, so fifty remain over for myself, without counting the ducats which the princess intends for me. Besides, I shall be no such fool as to give my servant, who steals from me every day, the reward the princess has set apart for him; and if I give him outside work to do, it is my opportunity; he is my slave, and the reward is properly mine."

"Listen, John!" said Pöllnitz to his servant, as he entered his apartment. Poor John was, at the same time, body-servant, jockey, and coachman. "Listen; do you know exactly how much you have loaned me?"

"To a copper, your excellency," said John, joyfully. Poor John thought that the hour of settlement had come. "Your excellency owes me fifty-three thalers, four groschen, and five pennies."

"Common soul," cried Pöllnitz, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously, "to be able to keep in remembrance such pitiful things as groschen and coppers. Well, I have a most pressing and important commission for you. You must saddle your horse immediately, and hasten to deliver this letter to the Duke of Wurtemberg. You must ride night and day and not rest till you arrive and deliver this

packet into the duke's own hands. I will then allow you a day's rest for yourself and horse; your return must be equally rapid. If you are here again in eight days, I will reward you royally."

"That is to say, your excellency—" said John, in breathless expectation.

"That is to say, I will pay you half the sum I owe you, if you are here in eight days; if you are absent longer, you will get only a third."

"And if I return a day earlier?" said John, sighing.

"I will give you a few extra thalers as a reward," said Pöllnitz.

"But your excellency will, besides this, give me money for the journey," said John, timidly.

"Miserable, shameless beggar!" cried Pöllnitz; "always demanding more than one is willing to accord you. Learn from your noble master that there is nothing more pitiful, more sordid than gold, and that those only are truly noble who serve others for honor's sake, and give no thought to reward."

"But, your grace, I have already the honor to have lent you all my money. I have not even a groschen to buy food for myself and horse on my journey."

"As for your money, sir, it is, under all circumstances, much safer with me than with you. You would surely spend it foolishly, while I will keep it together. Besides this, there is no other way to make servants faithful and submissive but to bind them to you by the miserable bond of selfishness. You would have left me a hundred times, if you had not been tied down by your own pitiful interests. You know well that if you leave me without my permission, the law allows me to punish you, by giving the money I owe you to the poor. But enough of foolish talking! Make ready for the journey; in half an hour you must leave Berlin behind you. I will give you a few thalers to buy food. Now, hasten! Remember, if you remain away longer than eight days, I will give you only a third of the money I am keeping for you."

This terrible threat had its effect upon poor John.

In eight days Pöllnitz sought the princess, and with a triumphant glance, slipped a letter into her hand, which read thus:

"I thank you, princess, that you have remembered me, and given me an opportunity to aid the unhappy. You are right. God made man to be free. I am no jailer, and my officers are not constables. They have, indeed, the duty to conduct the unhappy man who has been for three days the guest of my house, further on toward the fortress, but his feet and his hands shall be free, and if he takes a lesson from the bird in velocity, and from the wild horse in speed, his present escape will cost him less than his flight from Glatz. My

officers cannot be always on the watch, and God's world is large; it is impossible to guard every point. My soldiers accompany him to the brook Cöslin. I commend the officer who will be discharged for neglect of duty to your highness. FERDINAND."

"He will have my help and my eternal gratitude," whispered Amelia; she then pressed the letter of the duke passsonately to her lips. "Oh, my God! I feel to-day what I have never before thought possible, that one can be happy without happiness. If fate will be merciful, and not thwart the noble purpose of Duke Ferdinand, from this time onward I will never murmur—never complain. I will demand nothing of the future; never more to see him, never more to hear from him, only that he may be free and happy."

In the joy of her heart she not only fulfilled her promise to give the messenger a gold piece for every hour of his journey, but she added a costly diamond pin for Pöllnitz, which the experienced baron, even while receiving it from the trembling hand of the princess, valued at fifty louis d'or.

The baron returned with a well-filled purse and a diamond pin to his dwelling, and with imposing solemnity he called John into his boudoir.

"John," said he, "I am content with you. You have promptly fulfilled my commands. You returned the seventh day, and have earned the extra thalers. As for your money, how much do I owe you?"

"Fifty-three thalers, four groschen, and five pennies."

"And the half of this is—"

"Twenty-seven thalers, fourteen groschen, two and a half pennies," said John, with a loudly beating heart and an expectant smile. He saw that the purse was well filled, and that his master was taking out the gold pieces."

"I will give you, including your extra guldens, twenty-eight thalers, fourteen groschen, two and a half pennies," said Pöllnitz, laying some gold pieces on the table. "Here are six louis d'or, or thirty-six thalers in gold to reckon up; the fractions you claim are beneath my dignity. Take them, John, they are yours."

John uttered a cry of rapture, and sprang forward with outstretched hands to seize his gold. He had succeeded in gathering up three louis d'or, when the powerful hand of the baron seized him and held him back.

"John," said he, "I read in your wild, disordered countenance that you are a spendthrift, and this gold, which you have earned honestly, will soon be wasted in boundless follies. It is my duty, as your conscientious master and friend, to prevent this. I cannot allow you to take all of this money—only one-half; only three louis

d'or. I will put the other three with the sum which I still hold, and take care of it for you."

With an appearance of firm principle and piety, he grasped the three louis d'or upon which the sighing John fixed his tearful eyes.

"And now, what is the amount," said Pöllnitz, gravely, "which you have placed in my hands for safe-keeping?"

"Thirty-two thalers, fourteen groschen, and five pennies," said John; "and then the fractions from the three louis d'ors makes a thaler and eight groschen."

"Pitiful miser! You dare to reckon fractions against your master, who, in his magnanimity, has just presented you with gold! This is a meanness which merits exemplary punishment."

CHAPTER II.

TRENCK ON HIS WAY TO PRISON.

BEFORE the palace of the Duke of Wurtemberg, in Cöslin, stood the light, open carriage in which the duke was accustomed to make excursions, when inclined to carry the reins himself, and enjoy freedom and the pure, fresh air, without etiquette and ceremony.

To-day, however, the carriage was not intended for an ordinary excursion, but to transport a prisoner. This prisoner was no other than the unhappy Frederick Trenck, whom the cowardly republic of Dantzic, terrified at the menaces of the king, had delivered up to the Prussian police.

The intelligence of his unhappy fate flew like a herald before him. He was guarded by twelve hussars, and the sad procession was received everywhere throughout the journey with kindly sympathy. All exerted themselves to give undoubted proofs of pity and consideration. Even the officers in command, who sat by him in the carriage, and who were changed at every station, treated him as a loved comrade in arms, and not as a state prisoner.

But while all sighed and trembled for him, Trenck alone was gay; his countenance alone was calm and courageous. Not one moment, during the three days he passed in the palace of the duke, was his youthful and handsome face clouded by a single shadow. Not one moment did that happy, cheerful manner, by which he won all hearts, desert him. At the table, he was the brightest and wittiest; his amusing narratives, anecdotes, and droll ideas made not only the duke, but the duchess and her maids, laugh merrily. In the afternoons, in the saloon of the duchess, he astonished and enraptured the whole court circle by improvising upon any given

theme, and by the tasteful and artistic manner in which he sang the national ballads he had learned on his journeys through Italy, Germany, and Russia. At other times, he conversed with the duke upon philosophy and state policy; and he was amazed at the varied information and wisdom of this young man, who seemed an experienced soldier and an adroit diplomat, a profound statesman, and a learned historian. By his dazzling talents, he not only interested but enchained his listeners.

The duke felt sadly that it was not possible to retain the prisoner longer in Cöslin. Three days of rest was the utmost that could be granted Trenck, without exciting suspicion. He sighed, as he told Trenck that his duty required of him to send him further on his dark journey.

Trenck received this announcement with perfect composure, with calm self-possession. He took leave of the duke and duchess, and thanked them gayly for their gracious reception.

"I hope that my imprisonment will be of short duration, and then your highness will, I trust, allow me to return to you, and offer the thanks of a free man."

"May we soon meet again!" said the duke, and he looked searchingly upon Trenck, as if he wished to read his innermost thoughts. "As soon as you are free, come to me. I will not forsake you, no matter under what circumstances you obtain your freedom."

Had Trenck observed the last emphatic words of the duke, and did he understand their meaning? The duke did not know. No wink of the eyelid, not the slightest sign, gave evidence that Trenck had noticed their significance. He bowed smilingly, left the room with a firm step, and entered the carriage.

The duke called back the ordnance officer who was to conduct him to the next station.

"You have not forgotten my command?" said he.

"No, your highness, I have not forgotten; and obedience is a joyful duty, which I will perform punctually."

"You will repeat this command, in my name, to the officer at the next station, and commission him to have it repeated at every station where my regiments are quartered. Every one shall give Trenck an opportunity to escape, but silently; no word must be spoken to him on the subject. It must depend upon him to make use of the most favorable moment. My intentions toward him must be understood by him without explanations. He who is so unfortunate as to allow the prisoner to escape, can only be blamed for carelessness in duty. Upon me alone will rest the responsibility to the King of Prussia. You shall proceed but five or six miles each day; at this rate of travel it will take four days to reach the last barracks

of my soldiers, and almost the entire journey lies through dark, thick woods, and solitary highways. Now go, and may God be with you!"

The duke stepped to the window to see Trenck depart, and to give him a last greeting.

"Well, if he is not at liberty in the next few days, it will surely not be my fault," murmured Duke Ferdinand, "and Princess Amelia cannot reproach me."

As Trenck drove from the gate, Duke Ferdinand turned thoughtfully away. He was, against his will, oppressed by sad presentiments. For Trenck, this journey over the highways in the light, open carriage, was actual enjoyment. He inhaled joyfully the pure, warm, summer air—his eyes rested with rapture upon the waving corn-fields, and the blooming, fragrant meadows through which they passed. With gay shouts and songs he seemed to rival the lark as she winged her way into the clouds above him. He was innocent, careless, and happy as a child. The world of Nature had been shut out from him in the dark, close carriage which had brought him to Cöslin; she greeted him now with glad smiles and gay adorning. It seemed as if she were decorated for him with her most odorous blossoms and most glorious sunshine—as if she sent her softest breeze to kiss his cheek and whisper love-greetings in his ear. With upturned, dreamy glance, he followed the graceful movements of the pure, white clouds, and the rapid flight of the birds. Trenck was so happy in even this appearance of freedom, that he mistook it for liberty.

The carriage rolled slowly over the sandy highways, and now entered a wood. The sweet odor of the fir-trees drew from Trenck a cry of rapture. He had felt the heat of the sun to be oppressive, and he now laid his head back under the shadow of the thick trees with a feeling of gladness.

It will take us some hours to get through this forest," said the ordnance officer. "It is one of the thickest woods in this region, and the terror of the police. The escaped prisoner who succeeds in concealing himself here, may defy discovery. It is impossible to pursue him in these dark, tangled woods, and a few hours conduct him to the sea-shore, where there are ever small fishing-boats ready to receive the fugitive and place him safely upon some passing ship. But excuse me, sir! the sun has been blazing down so hotly upon my head that I feel thoroughly wearied, and will follow the example of my coachman. Look! he is fast asleep, and the horses are moving on of their own good-will. Good-night, Baron Trenck."

He closed his eyes, and in a short time his loud snores and the nodding of his head from side to side gave assurance that he, also, was locked in slumber.

Profound stillness reigned around. Trenck gave himself wholly to the enjoyment of the moment. The peaceful stillness of the forest, interrupted only at intervals by the snorting of the horses, the sleepy chatter of the birds among the dark green branches, and the soft rustling and whispering of the trees, filled him with delight.

"It is clear," he said to himself, "that this arrest in Dantzic was only a manœuvre to terrify me. I rejected the proposal of the Prussian ambassador in Vienna, to return to Berlin and enter again the Prussian service, so the king wishes to punish and frighten me. This is a jest—a comedy!—which the king is carrying on at my expense. If I were really regarded as a deserter, as a prisoner for the crime of high treason, no officer would dare to guard me so carelessly. In the beginning, I was harshly treated, in order to alarm and deceive me, and truly those twelve silent hussars, continually surrounding the closed carriage, had rather a melancholy aspect, and I confess I was imposed upon. But the mask has fallen, and I see behind the smiling, good-humored face of the king. He loved me truly once, and was as kind as a father. The old love has awakened and spoken in my favor. Frederick wishes to have me again in Berlin—that is all; and he knows well that I can be of service to him. He who has his spies everywhere, knows that no one else can give him such definite information as to the intentions and plans of Russia as I can—that no one knows so certainly what the preparations for war, now going on throughout the whole of Russia, signify. Yes, yes; so it is! Frederick will have me again in his service; he knows of my intimacy with the all-powerful wife of Bestuchef; that I am in constant correspondence with her, and in this way informed of all the plans of the Russian government.* Possibly, the king intends to send me as a secret ambassador to St. Petersburg! That would, indeed, open a career to me, and bring me exalted honor, and perhaps make that event possible which has heretofore only floated before my dazzled sight like a dream-picture. Oh, Amelia! noblest, most constant of women! could the dreams of our youth be realized? If fate, softened by your tears and your heroic courage, would at last unite you with him you have so fondly and so truly loved! Misled by youth, presumption, and levity, I have sometimes trifled with my most holy remembrances, sometimes seemed unfaithful; but my love to you has never failed; I have worn it as a talisman about my heart. I have ever worshipped you, I have ever hoped in you, and I will believe in you always, if I doubt and despair of all others. Oh, Amelia! protecting angel of my life! perhaps I may now return to you. I shall see you again,

* Frederick Trenck's "Memoirs."

look once more into your beauteous eyes, kneel humbly before you, and receive absolution for my sins. They were but sins of the flesh, my soul had no part in them. I will return to you, and live free, honored, and happy by your side. I know this by the gracious reception of the duke; I know it by the careless manner in which I am guarded. Before the officer went to sleep he told me how securely a fugitive could hide himself in these woods. I, however, have no necessity to hide myself; no misfortune hovers over me, honor and gladness beckon me on. I will not be so foolish as to fly; life opens to me new and flowery paths, greets me with laughing hopes." *

Wholly occupied with these thoughts, Trenck leaned back in the carriage and gave himself up to bright dreams of the future. Slowly the horses moved through the deep, white sand, which made the roll of the wheels noiseless, and effaced instantaneously the footprints of men. The officer still slept, the coachman had dropped the reins, and nodded here and there as if intoxicated. The wood was drear and empty; no human dwelling, no human face was seen. Had Trenck wished to escape, one spring from the low, open carriage; a hundred hasty steps would have brought him to a thicket where discovery was impossible; the carriage would have rolled on quietly, and when the sleepers aroused themselves, they would have had no idea of the direction Trenck had taken. The loose and rolling sand would not have retained his footprints, and the whispering trees would not have betrayed him.

Trenck would not fly; he was full of romance, faith, and hope; his sanguine temper painted his future in enchanting colors. No, he would not flee, he had faith in his star. Life's earnest tragedy had yet for him a smiling face, and life's bitter truths seemed alluring visions. No, the king only wished to try him; he wished to see if he could frighten him into an effort to escape; he gave him the opportunity for flight, but if he made use of it, he would be lost forever in the eyes of Frederick, and his prospects utterly destroyed. If he bravely suffered the chance of escape to pass by, and arrived in Berlin, to all appearance a prisoner, the king would have the agreeable task of undeceiving him, and Trenck would have shown conclusively that he had faith in the king's magnanimity, and gave himself up to him without fear. He would have proved also that his conscience was clear, and that, without flattering, he could yield himself to the judgment of the king." No, Trenck would not fly. In Berlin, liberty, love, and Amelia awaited him; he would lose all this by flight; it would all remain his if he did not allow himself to be enticed by the flattering goddess, opportunity, who now beck-

* "Frederick Trenck's Memoirs."

oned and nodded smilingly from behind every tree and every thicket. Trenck withstood these enticements during three long days; with careless indifference he passed slowly on through this lonely region; in his arrogant blindness and self-confidence he did not observe the careworn and anxious looks of the officers who conducted him; he did not hear or understand the low, hesitating insinuations they dared to speak.

"This is your last resting-point," said the officer who had conducted him from the last station. "You will remain here this afternoon, and early to-morrow morning the cavalry officer Von Halber will conduct you to Berlin, where the last barracks of our regiment are to be found; from that point the infantry garrison will take charge of your further transportation."

"I shall not make their duties difficult," said Trenck, gayly. "You see I am a good-natured prisoner; no Argus eyes are necessary, as I have no intention to flee."

The officer gazed into his calm, smiling face with amazement, and then stepped out with the officer Von Halber, into whose house they had now entered, to make known his doubts and apprehensions.

"Perhaps the opportunities which have been offered him have not been sufficiently manifest," said Von Halber. "Perhaps he has not regarded them as safe, and he fears a failure. In that he is right; a vain attempt at flight would be much more prejudicial to him than to yield himself without opposition. Well, I will see that he has now a sure chance to escape, and you may believe he will be cunning enough to take advantage of it. You may say this much to his highness the duke."

"But do not forget that the duke commanded us not to betray his intention to prepare these opportunities by a single word. This course would compromise the duke and all of us."

"I understand perfectly," said Von Halber; "I will speak eloquently by deeds, and not with words."

True to this intention, Von Halber, after having partaken of a gay dinner with Trenck and several officers, left his house, accompanied by all his servants.

"The horses must be exercised," said he; and, as he was unmarried, no one remained in the house but Trenck.

"You will be my house-guard for several hours," said the officer to Trenck, who was standing at the door as he drove off. "I hope no one will come to disturb your solitude. My officers all accompany me, and I have no acquaintance in this little village. You will be entirely alone, and if, on my return, I find that you have disappeared in mist and fog, I shall believe that *ennui* has extinguished you—reduced you to a bodiless nothing."

"Well, I think he must have understood that," said Von Halber, as he dashed down the street, followed by his staff. "He must be blind and deaf if he does not flee from the fate before him."

Trenck, alas! had not understood. He believed in no danger, and did not, therefore, see the necessity for flight. He found this quiet, lonely house inexpressibly wearisome. He wandered through the rooms, seeking some object of interest, or some book which would enable him to pass the tedious hours. The cavalry officer was a gallant and experienced soldier, but he was no scholar, and had nothing to do with books. Trenck's search was in vain. Discontented and restless, he wandered about, and at last entered the little court which led to the stable. A welcome sound fell on his ears, and made his heart beat jofyully; with rapid steps he entered the stable. Two splendid horses stood in the stalls, snorting and stamping impatiently; they were evidently riding-horses, for near them hung saddles and bridles. Their nostrils dilated proudly as they threw their heads back to breathe the fresh air which rushed in at the open door. It appeared to Trenck that their flashing eyes were pleading to him for liberty and action.

"Poor beasts," said he, stepping forward, and patting and caressing them—"poor beasts, you also pine for liberty, and hope for my assistance; but I cannot, I dare not aid you. Like you, I also am a prisoner, and like you also, a prisoner to my will. If you would use your strength, one movement of your powerful muscles would tear your bonds asunder, and your feet would bear you swiftly like wings through the air. If I would use the present opportunity, which beckons and smiles upon me, it would be only necessary to spring upon your back and dash off into God's fair and lovely world. We would reach our goal, we would be free, but we would both be lost; we would be recaptured, and would bitterly repent our short dream of self-acquired freedom. It is better for us both that we remain as we are; bound, not with chains laid upon our bodies, but by wisdom and discretion.

So saying, he smoothed tenderly the glossy throat of the gallant steed, whose jofyul neigh filled his heart with an inexplicable melancholy.

"I must leave you," murmured he, shudderingly; "your lusty neighing intoxicates my senses, and reminds me of green fields and fragrant meadows; of the broad highways, and the glad feeling of liberty which one enjoys when flying through the world on the back of a gallant steed. No! no! I dare no longer look upon you; all my wisdom and discretion might melt away, and I might be allured to seek for myself that freedom which I must receive alone at the hands of the king, in Berlin."

With hasty steps Trenck left the stable and returned to the house, where he stretched himself upon the sofa, and gave himself up to dreamland. It was twilight when Halber returned from his long ride.

"All is quiet and peaceful," said he, as he entered the house. "The bird has flown, this time; he found the opportunity favorable."

With a contented smile, he entered his room, but his expression changed suddenly, and his trembling lips muttered a soldier's curse. There lay Trenck in peaceful slumber; his handsome, youthful face was bright and free from care, and those must be sweet dreams which floated around him, for he smiled in his sleep.

"Poor fellow!" said Von Halber, shaking his head; "he must be mad, or struck with blindness, and cannot see the yawning abyss at his feet."

He awakened Trenck, and asked him how he had amused himself, during the long hours of solitude.

"I looked through all your house, and then entered the stables and gladdened my heart by the sight of your beautiful horses."

"Thunder and lightning! You have then seen my horses," cried Halber, thoroughly provoked. "Did no wish arise in your heart to mount one and seek your liberty?"

Frederick Trenck smiled. "The wish, indeed, arose in my heart, but I suppressed it manfully. Do you not see, dear Halber, that it would be unthankful and unknightly to reward in this cowardly and contemptible way the magnanimous confidence you have shown me."

"Truly, you are an honorable gentleman," cried Halber, greatly touched; "I had not thought of that. It would not have been well to flee from my house."

"To-morrow he will fly," thought the good-natured soldier, "when once more alone—to-morrow, and the opportunity shall not be wanting."

Von Halber left his house early in the morning to conduct his prisoner to Berlin. No one accompanied them; no one but the coachman, who sat upon the box and never looked behind him.

Their path led through a thick wood. Von Halber entertained the prisoner as the lieutenant had done who conducted Trenck the day he left Cöslin. He called his attention to the denseness of the forest, and spoke of the many fugitives who had concealed themselves there till pursuit was abandoned. He then invited Trenck to get down and walk with him, near the carriage.

As Trenck accepted the invitation, and strolled along by his side in careless indifference, Von Halber suddenly observed that the ground was covered with mushrooms.

"Let us gather a few," said he; "the young wife of one of my

friends understands how to make a glorious dish of them, and if I take her a large collection, she will consider it a kind attention. Let us take our hats and handkerchiefs, and fill them. You will take the right path into the wood, and I the left. In one hour we will meet here again."

Without waiting for an answer, the good Halber turned to the left in the wood, and was lost in the thicket. In an hour he returned to the carriage, and found Trenck smilingly awaiting him.

He turned pale, and with an expression of exasperation, he exclaimed:

"You have not then lost yourself in the woods?"

"I have not lost myself," said Trenck, quietly; "and I have gathered a quantity of beautiful mushrooms."

Trenck handed him his handkerchief, filled with small, round mushrooms. Halber threw them with a sort of despair into the carriage, and then, without saying one word, he mounted and nodded to Trenck to follow him.

"And now let us be off," said he, shortly. "Coachman, drive on!"

He leaned back in the carriage, and with frowning brow he gazed up into the heavens.

Slowly the carriage rolled through the sand, and it seemed as if the panting, creeping horses shrank back from reaching their goal, the boundary-line of the Wurtembergian dragoons. Trenck had followed his companion's example, and leaned back in the carriage. Halber was gloomy and filled with dark forebodings. Trenck was gay and unembarrassed; not the slightest trace of care or mistrust could be read in his features.

They moved onward silently. The air was fresh and pure, the heavens clear; but a dark cloud was round about the path of this dazzled, blinded young officer. The birds sang of it on the green boughs, but Trenck would not understand them. They sang of liberty and gladness; they called to him to follow their example, and fly far from the haunts of men! The dark wood echoed Fly! fly! in powerful organ-tones, but Trenck took them for the holy hymns of God's peaceful, sleeping world. He heard not the trees, as with warning voices they bowed down and murmured, Flee! flee! Come under our shadow, we will conceal you till the danger be overpast! Flee! flee! Misfortune, like a cruel vulture, is floating over you—already her fangs are extended to grasp you. The desert winds, in wild haste rushed by and covering this poor child of sorrow with clouds of dust, whispered in his ear, Fly! fly!—follow my example and rush madly backward! Misfortune advances to meet you, and a river of tears flows down the path you are blindly

following. Turn your head and flee, before this broad, deep stream overtakes you. The creaking wheels seemed to sob out, Fly! fly! we are rolling you onward to a dark and eternal prison! Do you not hear the clashing of chains? Do you not see the open grave at your feet? These are your chains!—that is your grave, already prepared for the living, glowing heart! Fly! then, fly! You are yet free to choose. The clouds which swayed on over the heavens, traced in purple and gold the warning words, Fly! fly! or you look upon us for the last time! Upon the anxious face of Von Halber was also to be seen, Fly now, it is high time! I see the end of the wood!—I see the first houses of Böslin. Fly! then, fly!—it is high time! Alas, Trenck's eyes were blinded, and his ears were filled with dust.

"Those whom demons will destroy, they first strike with blindness." Trenck's evil genius had blinded his eyes—his destruction was sure. There remained no hope of escape. The carriage had reached the end of the wood and rolled now over the *chaussè* to Böslin.

But what means this great crowd before the stately house which is decorated with the Prussian arms? What means this troop of soldiers who with stern, frowning brows, surround the dark coach with the closed windows?

"We are in Böslin," said Von Halber, pointing toward the group of soldiers. "That is the post-house, and, as you see, we are expected."

For the first time Trenck was pale, and horror was written in his face. "I am lost!" stammered he, completely overcome, and sinking back into the carriage he cast a wild, despairing glance around him, and seized the arm of Halber with a powerful hand.

"Be merciful, sir! oh, be merciful! Let us move more slowly. Turn back, oh, turn back! just to the entrance of the wood—only to the entrance of the street!"

"You see that is impossible," said Von Halber, sadly. "We are recognized; if we turn back now, they will welcome us with bullets."

"It were far better for me to die," murmured Trenck, "than to enter that dark prison—that open grave!"

"Alas! you would not fly—you would not understand me. I gave you many opportunities, but you would not avail yourself of them."

"I was mad, mad!" cried Trenck. "I had confidence in myself—I had faith in my good star—but the curse of my evil genius has overtaken me. Oh, my God! I am lost, lost! All my hopes were deceptive—the king is my irreconcilable enemy, and he will revenge my past life on my future! I have this knowledge too late. Oh, Halber! go slowly, slowly; I must give you my last testament.

Mark well what I say—these are the last words of a man who is more to be pitied than the dying. It is a small service which I ask of you, but my existence depends upon it: Go quickly to the Duke of Wurtemberg and say this to him: 'Frederick von Trenck sends Duke Ferdinand his last greeting! He is a prisoner, and in death's extremity. Will the duke take pity on him, and convey this news to her whom he knows to be Trenck's friend? Tell her Trenck is a prisoner, and hopes only in her!' Will you swear to me to do this?"

"I swear it," said Von Halber, deeply moved.

The carriage stopped. Von Halber sprang down and greeted the officer who was to take charge of Trenck. The soldiers placed themselves on both sides of the coach, and the door was opened. Trenck cast a last despairing, imploring glance to heaven, then, with a firm step, approached the open coach. In the act of entering, he turned once more to the officer Von Halber, whose friendly eyes were darkened with tears.

"You will not forget, sir!"

These simply, sadly-spoken words, breaking the solemn, imposing silence, made an impression upon the hearts of even the stern soldiers around them.

"I will not forget," said Von Halber, solemnly.

Trenck bowed and entered the coach. The officer followed him and closed the door. Slowly, like a funeral procession, the coach moved on. Von Halber gazed after him sadly.

"He is right, he is more to be pitied than the dying. I will hasten to fulfil his last testament."

Eight days later, the Princess Amelia received through the hands of Pöllnitz a letter from Duke Ferdinand. As she read it, she uttered a cry of anguish, and sank insensible upon the floor. The duke's letter contained these words:

"All my efforts were in vain; he would not fly, would not believe in his danger. In the casemates of Magdeburg sits a poor prisoner, whose last words directed to me were these: 'Say to her whom you know that I am a prisoner, and hope only in her.'"

CHAPTER III.

PRINCE HENRY AND HIS WIFE.

PRINCE HENRY walked restlessly backward and forward in his study; his brow was stern, and a strange fire flamed in his eye. He felt greatly agitated and oppressed, and scarcely knew the cause himself. Nothing had happened to disturb his equanimity and give

occasion for his wayward mood. The outside world wore its accustomed gay and festal aspect. To-day, as indeed almost every day since the prince resided at Rheinsberg, preparations were being made for a gay entertainment. A country *fête* was to be given in the woods near the palace, and all the guests were to appear as shepherds and sheperdesses.

Prince Henry had withdrawn to his own room to assume the tasteful costume which had been prepared for him; but he seemed to have entirely forgotten his purpose. The tailor and the *friseur* awaited him in vain in his dressing-room; he forgot their existence. He paced his room with rapid steps, and his tightly-compressed lips opened from time to time to utter a few broken, disconnected words.

Of what was the prince thinking? He did not know, or he would not confess it to himself. Perhaps he dared not look down deep into his heart and comprehend the new feelings and new wishes which were struggling there.

At times he stood still, and looked with a wild, rapt expression into the heavens, as if they alone could answer the mysterious questions his soul was whispering to him; then passed on with his hand pressed on his brow to control or restrain the thoughts which agitated him. He did not hear a light tap upon the door, he did not see it open, and his most intimate and dearest friend, Count Kalkreuth enter, dressed in the full costume of a shepherd.

Count Kalkreuth stood still, and did nothing to call the attention of the prince to his presence. He remained at the door; his face was also dark and troubled, and the glance which he fixed upon Prince Henry was *almost* one of hatred.

The prince turned, and the count's expression changed instantly; he stepped gayly forward and said:

"Your royal highness sees my astonishment at finding you lost in such deep thought, and your toilet not even commenced. I stand like Lot's blessed wife, turned to stone upon your threshold! Have you forgotten, my prince, that you commanded us all to be ready punctually at four o'clock? The castle clock is at this moment striking four. The ladies and gentlemen will now assemble in the music-saloon, as you directed, and you, prince, are not yet in costume."

"It is true," said Prince Henry, somewhat embarrassed, "I had forgotten; but I will hasten to make good my fault."

He stepped slowly, and with head bowed down, toward his dressing-room; at the door, he stood and looked back at the count.

"You are already in costume, my friend," said he, noticing for the first time the fantastic dress of the count. "Truly, this style becomes you marvellously; your bright-colored satin jacket shows

your fine proportions as advantageously as your captain's uniform. But what means this scarf which you wear upon your shoulder?"

"These are the colors of my shepherdess," said the count, with a constrained smile.

"Who is your shepherdess?"

"Your highness asks that, when you yourself selected her!" said Kalkreuth, astonished.

"Yes it is true; I forgot," said the prince. "The princess, my wife, is your shepherdess. Well, I sincerely hope you may find her highness more gay and gracious than she was to me this morning, and that you may see the rare beauty of this fair rose, of which I only feel the thorns!"

While the prince was speaking, the count became deathly pale, and looked at him with painful distrust.

"It is true," he replied, "the princess is cold and reserved toward her husband. Without doubt, this is the result of a determination to meet your wishes fully, and to remain clearly within the boundary which your highness at the time of your marriage, more than a year ago, plainly marked out for her. The princess knows, perhaps too well, that her husband is wholly indifferent to her beauty and her expression, and therefore feels herself at liberty to yield to each changeful mood without ceremony in your presence."

"You are right," said Prince Henry, sadly, "she is wholly indifferent to me, and I have told her so. We will speak no more of it. What, indeed, are the moods of the princess to me? I will dress, go to the music-saloon, and ask for forgiveness in my name for my delay. I will soon be ready; I will seek the princess in her apartments, and we will join you in a few moments."

The prince bowed and left the room. Kalkreuth gazed after him thoughtfully and anxious.

"His manner is unaccountably strange to-day," whispered he. "Has he, perhaps, any suspicion; and these apparently artless questions and remarks, this distraction and forgetfulness— But no, no! it is impossible; he can know nothing—no one has betrayed me. It is the anguish of my conscience which makes me fearful; this suffering I must bear, it is the penalty I pay for my great happiness." The count sighed deeply and withdrew.

The prince completed his toilet, and sought the princess in her apartment, in the other wing of the castle. With hasty steps he passed through the corridors; his countenance was anxious and expectant, his eyes were glowing and impatient, haste marked every movement; he held in his hand a costly bouquet of white camelias. When he reached the anteroom of the princess he became pallid, and leaned for a moment, trembling and gasping for breath, against

the wall; he soon, however, by a strong effort, controlled himself, entered, and commanded the servant to announce him.

The Princess Wilhelmina received her husband with a stiff, ceremonious courtesy, which, in its courtly etiquette, did not correspond with the costume she had assumed. The proud and stately princess was transformed into an enchanting, lovely shepherdess. It was, indeed, difficult to decide if the princess were more beautiful in her splendid court toilet, adorned with diamonds, and wearing on her high, clear brow a sparkling diadem, proud and conscious of her beauty and her triumphs; or now, in this artistic costume, in which she was less imposing, but more enchanting and more gracious.

Wilhelmina wore an under-skirt of white satin, a red tunic, gayly embroidered and festooned with white roses; a white satin bodice, embroidered with silver, defined her full but pliant form, and displayed her luxurious bust in its rare proportions; a bouquet of red roses was fastened upon each shoulder, and held the silvery veil which half concealed the lovely throat and bosom. The long, black, unpowdered hair fell in graceful ringlets about her fair neck, and formed a dark frame for the beautiful face, glowing with health, youth, and intellect. In her hair she wore a wreath of red and white roses, and a bouquet of the same in her bosom.

She was, indeed, dazzling in her beauty, and was, perhaps, conscious of her power; her eyes sparkled, and a ravishing smile played upon her lips as she looked up at the prince, who stood dumb and embarrassed before her, and could find no words to express his admiration.

"If it is agreeable to your highness, let us join your company," said the princess, at last, anxious to put an end to this interview. She extended her hand coolly to her husband; he grasped it, and held it fast, but still stood silently looking upon her.

"Madame," said he, at last, in low and hesitating tones—"madame, I have a request to make of you."

"Command me, my husband," said she, coldly; "what shall I do?"

"I do not wish to command, but to entreat," said the prince.

"Well, then, Prince Henry, speak your request."

The prince gave the bouquet of white camelias to his wife, and said, in a faltering, pleading voice, "I beg you to accept this bouquet from me, and to wear it to-day in your bosom, although it is not your shepherd who offers it!"

"No, not my shepherd, but my husband," said the princess, removing angrily the bouquet of roses from her bodice. "I must, of course, wear the flowers he gives me."

Without giving one glance at the flowers, she fastened them in her bosom.

"If you will not look upon them for my sake," said the prince, earnestly, "I pray you, give them one glance for the flowers' sake. You will at least feel assured that no other shepherdess is adorned with such a bouquet."

"Yes," said Wilhelmina, "these are not white roses; indeed, they seem to be artificial flowers; their leaves are hard and thick like alabaster, and dazzlingly white like snow. What flowers are these, my prince?"

"They are camelias. I recently heard you speak of these rare flowers, which had just been imported to Europe. I hoped to please you by placing them in your hands."

"Certainly; but I did not know that these new exotics were blooming in our land."

"And they are not," said Prince Henry. "This bouquet comes from Schwetzingen; there, only, in Germany, in the celebrated green-houses of the Margravine of Baden can they be seen."

"How, then, did you get them?" said the princess, astonished.

"I sent a courier to Schwetzingen; the blossoms were wrapped in moist, green moss, and are so well preserved, that they look as fresh as when they were gathered six days since."

"And you sent for them for me?" said Wilhelmina.

"Did you not express a wish to see them?" replied the prince; and his glance rested upon her with such ardent passion that, blushing, she cast her eyes to the ground, and stood still and ashamed before him.

"And you have not one little word of thanks?" said the prince, after a long pause. "Will you not fasten these pure flowers on your bosom, and allow them to die a happy death there? Alas! you are hard and cruel with me, princess; it seems to me that your husband dare claim from you more of kindliness and friendship."

"My husband!" cried she, in a mocking tone. She turned her eyes, searchingly, in every direction around the room. "It appears to me that we are alone and wholly unobserved, and that it is here unnecessary for us to play this comedy and call ourselves by those names which we adopted to deceive the world, and which you taught me to regard as empty titles. It is, indeed, possible that a wife should be more friendly and affectionate to her husband; but I do not believe that a lady dare give more encouragement to a cavalier than I manifest to your royal highness."

"You are more friendly to all the world than to me, Wilhelmina," said the prince, angrily. "You have a kindly word, a magic glance, a gracious reception for all others who approach you. To me alone

are you cold and stern; your countenance darkens as soon as I draw near; the smile vanishes from your lips; your brow is clouded and your eyes are fixed upon me with almost an expression of contempt. I see, madame, that you hate me! Well, then, hate me; but I do not deserve your contempt, and I will not endure it! It is enough that you martyr me to death with your cutting coldness, your crushing indifference. The world, at least, should not know that you hate me, and I will not be publicly humiliated by you. What did I do this morning, for example? Why were you so cold and scornful? Wherefore did you check your gay laugh as I entered the room? wherefore did you refuse me the little flower you held in your hand, and then throw it carelessly upon the floor?"

The princess looked at him with flashing eyes.

"You ask many questions, sir, and on many points," said she, sharply. "I do not think it necessary to reply to them. Let us join our company." She bowed proudly and advanced, but the prince held her back.

"Do not go," said he, entreatingly, "do not go. Say first that you pardon me, that you are no longer angry. Oh, Wilhelmina, you do not know what I suffer; you can never know the anguish which tortues my soul."

"I know it well; on the day of our marriage your highness explained all. It was not necessary to return to this bitter subject. I have not forgotten one word spoken on that festive occasion."

"What do you mean, Wilhelmina? How could I, on our wedding-day, have made known to you the tortures which I now suffer; from which I was then wholly free, and in whose possibility I did not believe?"

"It is possible that your sufferings have become more intolerable," said the princess, coldly; "but you confided them to me fully and frankly at that time. It was, indeed, the only time since our marriage we had any thing to confide. Our only secret is, that we do not love and never can love each other; that only in the eyes of the world are we married. There is no union of hearts."

"Oh, princess, your words are death!" And completely overcome, he sank upon a chair.

Wilhelmina looked at him coldly, without one trace of emotion.

"Death?" said she, "why should I slay you? We murder only those whom we love or hate. I neither love nor hate you."

"You are only, then, entirely indifferent to me," asked the prince.

"I think, your highness, this is what you asked of me, on our wedding-day. I have endeavored to meet your wishes, and thereby, at least, to prove to you that I had the virtue of obedience. Oh, I

can never forget that hour," cried the princess. "I came a stranger, alone, ill from home-sickness and anguish of heart, to Berlin. I was betrothed according to the fate of princesses. I was not consulted! I did not know—I had never seen the man to whom I must swear eternal love and faith. This was also your sad fate, my prince. We had never met. We saw each other for the first time as we stood before God's altar, and exchanged our vows to the sound of merry wedding-bells, and the roar of cannon. I am always thinking that the bells ring and the cannon thunders at royal marriages, to drown the timid, trembling yes, forced from pallid, unwilling lips, which rings in the ears of God and men like a discord —like the snap of a harp-string. The bells chimed melodiously. No man heard the yes at which our poor hearts rebelled! We alone heard and understood! You were noble, prince; you had been forced to swear a falsehood before the altar; but in the evening, when we were alone in our apartment, you told me the frank and honest truth. State policy united us; we did not and could never love each other! You were amiable enough to ask me to be your friend—your sister; and to give me an immediate proof of a brother's confidence, you confessed to me that, with all the ardor and ecstasy of your youthful heart, you had loved a woman who betrayed you, and thus extinguished forever all power to love. I, my prince, could not follow your frank example, and give a like confidence. I had nothing to relate. I had not loved! I loved you not! I was therefore grateful when you asked no love from me. You only asked that, with calm indifference, we should remain side by side, and greet each other, before the world, with the empty titles of wife and husband. I accepted this proposal joyfully, to remain an object of absolute indifference to you, and to regard you in the same light. I cannot, therefore, comprehend why you now reproach me."

"Yes! yes! I said and did all that," said Prince Henry, pale and trembling with emotion. "I was a madman! More than that, I was a blasphemer! Love is as God—holy, invisible, and eternal; and he who does not believe in her immortality, her omnipresence, is like the heathen, who has faith only in his gods of wood and stone, and whose dull eyes cannot behold the invisible glory of the Godhead. My heart had at that time received its first wound, and because it bled and pained me fearfully, I believed it to be dead, and I covered it up with bitter and cruel remembrances, as in an iron coffin, from which all escape was impossible. An angel drew near, and laid her soft, fine hand upon my coffin; my wounds were healed, my youth revived, and I dared hope in happiness and a future. At first, I would not confess this to myself. At first, I

thought to smother this new birth of my heart in the mourning veil of my past experience; but my heart was like a giant in his first manhood, and cast off all restraint; like Hercules in his cradle, he strangled the serpents which were hissing around him. It was indeed a painful happiness to know that I had again a heart; that I was capable of feeling the rapture and the pain, the longing, the hopes and fears, the enthusiasm and exaltation, the doubt and the despair which make the passion of love, and I have to thank you, Wilhelmina—you alone, you, my wife, for this new birth. You turn away your head, Wilhelmina! You smile derisively! It is true I have not the right to call you my wife. You are free to spurn me from you, to banish me forever into that cold, desert region to which I fled in the madness and blindness of my despair. But think well, princess; if you do this, you cast a shadow over my life. It is my whole future which I lay at your feet, a future for which fate perhaps intends great duties and greater deeds. I cannot fulfil these duties, I can perform no heroic deed, unless you, princess, grant me the blessing of happiness. I shall be a silent, unknown, and useless prince, the sad and pitiful hanger-on of a throne, despised and unloved, a burden only to my people, unless you give freedom and strength to my sick soul, which lies a prisoner at your feet. Wilhelmina, put an end to the tortures of the last few months, release me from the curse which binds my whole life in chains; speak but one word, and I shall have strength to govern the world, and prove to you that I am worthy of you. I will force the stars from heaven, and place them as a diadem upon your brow. Say only that you will try to love me, and I will thank you for happiness and fame."

Prince Henry was so filled with his passion and enthusiasm, that he did not remark the deadly pallor of Wilhelmina's face—that he did not see the look of anguish and horror with which her eyes rested for one moment upon him, then shrank blushingly and ashamed upon the floor. He seized her cold, nerveless hands, and pressed them to his heart; she submitted quietly. She seemed turned to stone.

"Be merciful, Wilhelmina; say that you forgive me—that you will try to love me."

The princess shuddered, and glanced up at him. "*I* must say that," murmured she, "and *you* have not once said that you love me."

The prince shouted with rapture, and, falling upon his knees, he exclaimed, "I love you! I adore you! I want nothing, will accept nothing, but you alone; you are my love, my hope, my future. Wilhelmina, if you do not intend me to die at your feet, say that

you do not spurn me—open your arms and clasp me to your heart."

The princess stood immovable for a moment, trembling and swaying from side to side; her lips opened as if to utter a wild, mad cry—pain was written on every feature. The prince saw nothing of this—his lips were pressed upon her hand, and he did not look up—he did not see his wife press her pale lips tightly together to force back her cries of despair—he did not see that her eyes were raised in unspeakable agony to heaven.

The battle was over; the princess bowed over her husband, and her hands softly raised him from his knees. "Stand up, prince—I dare not see you lying at my feet. You have a right to my love—you are my husband."

Prince Henry clasped her closely, passionately in his arms.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FETE IN THE WOODS.

No *fête* was ever brighter and gayer than that of Rheinsberg. It is true, the courtly circle waited a long time before the beginning of their merry sports. Hours passed before the princely pair joined their guests in the music-saloon.

The sun of royalty came at last, shedding light and gladness. Never had the princess looked more beautiful—more rosy. She seemed, indeed, to blush at the consciousness of her own attractions. Never had Prince Henry appeared so happy, so triumphant, as to-day. His flashing eyes seemed to challenge the whole world to compete with his happiness; joy and hope danced in his eyes; never had he given so gracious, so kindly a greeting to every guest, as to-day.

The whole assembly was bright and animated, and gave themselves up heartily to the beautiful idyl for which they had met together under the shadow of the noble trees in the fragrant woods of Rheinsberg. No gayer, lovelier shepherds and shepherdesses were ever seen in Arcadia, than those of Rheinsberg to-day. They laughed, and jested, and performed little comedies, and rejoiced in the innocent sports of the happy moment. Here wandered a shepherd and his shepherdess, chatting merrily; there, under the shadow of a mighty oak, lay a forlorn shepherd singing, accompanied by his *zitter*, a love-lorn ditty to his cruel shepherdess, who was leading two white lambs decked with ribbons, in a meadow near by, and replied to his tender pleading with mocking irony. Upon the little

lake, in the neighborhood of which they had assembled, the snow-white swans swam majestically to and fro. The lovely shepherdesses stood upon the borders and enticed the swans around them, and laughed derisively at the shepherds who had embarked in the little boats, and were now driven sportively back in every direction, and could find no place to land.

Prince Henry loved this sort of *fête*, and often gave such at Rheinsberg, but never had he seemed to enjoy himself so thoroughly as to-day. His guests generally *sympathized* in his happiness, but there was one who looked upon his joyous face with bitterness. This was Louise du Trouffle, once Louise von Kleist, once the beloved of the prince.

She was married, and her handsome, amiable, and intelligent husband was ever by her side; but the old wounds still burned, and her pride bled at the contempt of the prince. She knew he was ignorant of the great sacrifice she had been forced to make—that he despised, in place of admiring and pitying her.

The prince, in order to show his utter indifference, had invited her husband and herself to court. In the pride of his sick and wounded heart, he resolved to convince the world that the beautiful Louise von Kleist had not scorned and rejected his love. In her presence he resolved to show his young wife the most lover-like attentions, and prove to his false mistress that he neither sought nor fled from her—that he had utterly forgotten her.

But Louise was not deceived by this acting. She understood him thoroughly, and knew better than the prince himself, that his indifference was assumed, and his contempt and scorn was a veil thrown over his betrayed and quivering heart to conceal his sufferings from her. Louise had the courage to accept Prince Henry's invitations, and to take part in all the festivities with which he ostentatiously celebrated his happiness. She had the courage to receive his cutting coldness, his cruel sarcasm, his contempt, with calm composure and sweet submission. With the smile of a stoic, she offered her defenceless breast to his poisoned arrows, and even the tortures she endured were precious in her sight. She was convinced that the prince had not relinquished or forgotten her—that his indifference and contempt was assumed to hide his living, breathing love. For some time past the change in the manners and bearing of the prince had not escaped the sharp, searching glance of the experienced coquette. For a long time he *appeared* not to see her—now she felt that he *did not* see her. He had been wont to say the most indifferent things to her in a fierce, excited tone—now he was self-possessed, and spoke to her softly and kindly.

"The wound has healed," said Louise du Trouffle to herself. "He

no longer scorns because he no longer loves me." But she did not know that he had not only ceased to love her, but loved another passionately. This suspicion was excited, however, for the first time to-day. In the flashing eye, the glad smile, the proud glance which he fixed upon his fair young wife, Louise discovered that Henry had buried the old love and a new one had risen from its ashes. This knowledge tortured her heart in a wild storm of jealousy. She forgot all considerations of prudence, all fear, even of the king. She had been compelled to relinquish the hand of the prince, but she would not lose him wholly. Perhaps he would return to her when he knew what a fearful offering she had made to him. He would recognize her innocence, and mourn over the tortures he had inflicted during the last year. She would try this! She would play her last trump, and dare all with the hope of winning.

There stood the prince under the shadow of a large tree, gazing dreamily at his wife, who, with other shepherdesses, and her shepherd, Count Kalkreuth, was feeding the swans on the border of the lake. The prince was alone, and Louise rashly resolved to approach him. He greeted her with a slight nod, and turning his eyes again upon his wife, he said, carelessly, "Are you also here, Madame du Trouffle?"

"Your royal highness did me the honor to invite me—I am accustomed to obey your wishes, and I am here."

"That is kind," said the prince, abstractedly, still glancing at the princess.

Louise sighed deeply, and stepping nearer, she said, "Are you still angry with me, my prince? Have you never forgiven me?"

"What?" said the prince, quietly; "I do not remember that I have any thing to forgive."

"Ah, I see! you despise me still," said Louise, excitedly; "but I will bear this no longer! I will no longer creep about like a culprit, burdened with your curse and your scorn. You shall at least know what it cost me to earn your contempt—what a fearful sacrifice I was compelled to make to secure your supposed personal happiness. I gave up for you the happiness of my life, but I can and will no longer fill a place of shame in your memory. If, from time to time, your highness thinks of me, you shall do me justice!"

"I think no longer of you in anger," said the prince, smiling. "That sorrow has long since passed away."

"From *your* heart, prince, but not from mine! My heart bleeds, and will bleed eternally! You must not only forgive—you must do me justice. Listen, then; and so truly as there is a God above us, I will speak the tuth. I did not betray you—I was not faithless. My heart and my soul I laid gladly at your feet, and thanked God

for the fulness of my happiness. My thoughts, my existence, my future, was chained to you. I had no other will, no other wish, no other hope. I was your slave—I wanted nothing but your love."

"Ah, and then came this Monsieur du Trouffle, and broke your fetters—gave your heart liberty and wings for a new flight," said Prince Henry.

"No, then came the king and commanded me to give you up," murmured Louise; "then came the king, and forced me to offer up myself and my great love to your future welfare. Oh, my prince! recall that terrible hour in which we separated. I said to you that I had betrothed myself to Captain du Trouffle—that of my own free choice, and influenced by love alone, I gave myself to him."

"I remember that hour."

"Well, then, in that hour we were not alone. The king was concealed behind the *portière*, and listened to my words. He dictated them!—he threatened me with destruction if I betrayed his presence by look or word; if I gave you reason to suspect that I did not, of my own choice and lovingly, give myself to this unloved, yes, this hated man! I yielded only after the most fearful contest with the king, to whom, upon my knees and bathed in tears, I pleaded for pity."

"What means could the king use, what threats could he utter, which forced you to such a step?" said the prince, incredulously. "Did he threaten you with death if you did not obey? When one truly loves, death has no terrors! Did he say he would murder me if you did not release me? You knew I had a strong arm and a stronger will; you should have trusted both. You placed your fate in my hands; you should have obeyed no other commands than mine. And now shall I speak the whole truth? I do not believe in this sacrifice on your part; it would have required more than mortal strength, and it would have been cruel in the extreme. You saw what I suffered. My heart was torn with anguish! No, madame, no; you did not make this sacrifice, or, if you did, you loved me not. If you had loved me, you could not have seen me suffer so cruelly; you would have told the truth, even in the presence of the king. No earthly power can control true love; she is self-sustained and makes her own laws. No! no! I do not believe in this offering; and you make this excuse either to heal my sick heart, or because your pride is mortified at my want of consideration; you wish to recover my good opinion."

"Alas! alas! he does not believe me," cried Louise.

"No, I do not believe you," said the prince, kindly; "and yet you must not think that I am still angry. I not only forgive, but I thank you. It is to you, indeed, Louise, that I owe my present

happiness, all those noble and pure joys which a true love bestows. I thank you for this—you and the king. It was wise in the king to deny me that which I then thought essential to my happiness, but which would, at last, have brought us both to shame and to despair. The love, which must shun the light of day and hide itself in obscurity, pales, and withers, and dies. Happy love must have the sunlight of heaven and God's blessing upon it! All this failed in our case, and it was a blessing for us both that you saw it clearly, and resigned a doubtful happiness at my side for surer peace with Monsieur du Trouffle. From my soul I thank you, Louise. See what a costly treasure has bloomed for me from the grave of my betrayed love. Look at that lovely young woman who, although disguised as a shepherdess, stands out in the midst of all other women, an imperial queen! a queen of beauty, grace, and fascination! This charming, innocent, and modest young woman belongs to me; she is my wife; and I have your inconstancy to thank you for this rare gem. Oh, madame, I have indeed reason to forgive you for the past, to be grateful to you as long as I live. But for you I should never have married the Princess Wilhelmina. What no menaces, no entreaties, no commands of the king could accomplish, your faithlessness effected. I married! God, in his goodness, chose you to be a mediator between me and my fate; it was His will that, from your hand, I should receive my life's blessing. You cured me of a wandering and unworthy passion, that I might feel the truth and enjoy the blessing of a pure love, and a love which now fills my heart and soul, my thoughts, my existence for my darling wife."

"Ah, you are very cruel," said Lousie, scarcely able to suppress her tears of rage.

"I am only true, madame," said the prince, smiling. "You wished to know of me if I were still angry with you, and I reply that I have not only forgiven, but I bless your inconstancy. And now, I pray you let us end this conversation, which I will never renew. Let the past die and be buried! We have both of us commenced a new life under the sunshine of a new love; we will not allow any cloud of remembrances to cast a shadow upon it. Look, the beautiful shepherdesses are seeking flowers in the meadows, and my wife stands alone upon the borders of the lake. Allow me to join her, if only to see if the clear waters of the lake reflect back her image as lovely and enchanting as the reality."

The prince bowed, and with hasty steps took the path that led to the lake.

Louise looked at him scornfully. "He despises me and he loves her fondly; but she—does the princess love him?—not so! her glance is cold, icy, when she looks upon him; and to-day I saw her turn

pale as the prince approached her. No, she loves him not; but who then—who? she is young, ardent, and, it appears to me, impressible; she cannot live without love. I will find out; a day will come when I will take vengeance for this hour. I await that day!"

While Louise forced herself to appear gay, in order to meet her husband without embarrassment, and the prince walked hastily onward, the princess stood separated from her ladies, on the borders of the lake, with the Count Kalkreuth at her side. The count had been appointed her cavalier for the day, by the prince her husband; she seemed to give her undivided attention to the swans, who were floating before her, and stretching out their graceful necks to receive food from her hands. As she bowed down to feed the swans, she whispered lightly, "Listen, count, to what I have to say to you. If possible, laugh merrily, that my ladies may hear; let your countenance be gay, for I see the prince approaching. In ten minutes he will be with us; do you understand my low tones?"

"I understand you, princess; alas! I fear I understand without words; I have read my sentence in the eyes of your husband. The prince suspects me."

"No," said she, sadly bowing down and plucking a few violets, which she threw to the swans; "he has no suspicion, but he loves me."

The count sprang back as if wounded. "He loves you!" he cried, in a loud, almost threatening tone.

"For pity's sake speak low," said the princess. "Look, the ladies turn toward us, and are listening curiously, and you have frightened the swans from the shore. Laugh, I pray you; speak a few loud and jesting words, count, I implore you."

"I cannot," said the count. "Command me to throw myself into the lake and I will obey you joyfully, and in dying I will call your name and bless it; but do not ask me to smile when you tell me that the prince loves you."

"Yes, he loves me; he confessed it to-day," said the princess, shuddering. "Oh, it was a moment of inexpressible horror; a moment in which that became a sin which, until then, had been pure and innocent. So long as my husband did not love me, or ask my love, I was free to bestow it where I would and when I would: so soon as he loves me, and demands my love, I am a culprit if I refuse it."

"And I false to my friend," murmured Kalkreuth.

"We must instantly separate," whispered she. "We must bury our love out of our sight, which until now has lived purely and modestly in our hearts, and this must be its funeral procession. You see I have already begun to deck the grave with flowers, and

that tears are consecrating them." She pointed with her jewelled hand to the bouquet of white camelias which adorned her bosom.

"It was cruel not to wear my flowers," said the count. "Was it not enough to crush me?—must you also trample my poor flowers, consecrated with my kisses and my whispers, under your feet?"

"The red roses which you gave me," said she, lightly, "I will keep as a remembrance of the beautiful and glorious dream which the rude reality of life has dissipated. These camelias are superb, but without fragrance, and colorless as my sad features. I must wear them, for my husband gave them to me, and in so doing I decorate the grave of my love. Farewell!—hereafter I will live for my duties; as I cannot accept your love, I will merit your highest respect. Farewell, and if from this time onward we are cold and strange, never forget that our souls belong to each other, and when I dare no longer think of the past, I will pray for you."

"You never loved me," whispered the count, with pallid, trembling lips, "or you could not give me up so rashly; you would not have the cruel courage to spurn me from you. You are weary of me, and since the prince loves you, you despise the poor humble heart which laid itself at your feet. Yes, yes, I cannot compete with this man, who is a prince and the brother of a king; who—"

"Who is my husband," cried she, proudly, "and who, while he loves me, dares ask that I shall accept his love."

"Ah, now you are angry with me," stammered the count; "you—"

"Hush!" whispered she, "do you not see the prince? Do laugh! Bow down and give the swans these flowers!"

The count took the flowers, and as he gave them to the swans, he whispered:

"Give me at least a sign that you are not angry, and that you do not love the prince. Throw this hated bouquet, which has taken the place of mine, into the water; it is like a poisoned arrow in my heart."

"Hush!" whispered the princess. She turned and gave the prince a friendly welcome.

Prince Henry was so happy in her presence, and so dazzled by her beauty, that he did not remark the melancholy of the count, and spoke with him gayly and jestingly, while the count mastered himself, and replied in the same spirit.

The princess bowed down to the swans, whom she enticed once more with caresses to the borders of the lake. Suddenly she uttered a loud cry, and called to the two gentlemen for help. The great white swan had torn the camelias from the bosom of the princess, and sailed off proudly upon the clear waters of the lake.

CHAPTER V.

INTRIGUES.

WHILE Prince Henry celebrated Arcadian *fêtes* at Rheinsberg, and gave himself up to love and joy, King Frederick lived in philosophic retirement at Sans-Souci. He came to Berlin only to visit the queen-mother, now dangerously ill, or to attend the meetings of his cabinet ministers. Never had the king lived so quietly, never had he received so few guests at Sans-Souci, and, above all, never had the world so little cause to speak of the King of Prussia. He appeared content with the laurels which the two Silesian wars had placed upon his heroic brow, and he only indulged the wish that Europe, exhausted by her long and varied wars, would allow him that rest and peace which the world at large seemed to enjoy.

Those who were honored with invitations to Sans-Souci, and had opportunities to see the king, could only speak of that earthly paradise; of the peaceful stillness which reigned there, and which was reflected in every countenance; of Frederick's calm cheerfulness and innocent enjoyment.

"The king thinks no more of politics," said the frolicsome Berliners; "he is absorbed in the arts and sciences, and, above all other things, he lives to promote the peaceful prosperity of his people."

The balance of power and foreign relations troubled him no longer; he wished for no conquests, and thought not of war. In the morning he was occupied with scientific works, wrote in his "Histoire de mon Temps," or to his friends, and took part in the daily-recurring duties of the government. The remainder of the day was passed in the garden of Sans-Souci, in pleasant walks and animated conversation, closing always with music. Concerts took place every evening in the apartments of the king, in which he took part, and he practised difficult pieces of his own or Quantz's composition, under Quantz's direction. From time to time he was much occupied with his picture-gallery, and sent Gotzkowsky to Italy to purchase the paintings of the celebrated masters.

King Frederick appeared to have reached his goal; at least, that which, during the storm of war, he had often called his ideal; he could devote his life to philosophy and art in the enchanting retirement of his beloved Sans-Souci. The tumult and discord of the world did not trouble him; in fact, the whole world seemed to be at peace, and all Europe was glad and happy.

Maria Theresa was completely bound by the last peace contract at Dresden; besides, the two Silesian wars had weakened and im-

poverished Austria, and time was necessary to heal her wounds before she dared make a new attempt to reconquer the noble jewel of Silesia, which Frederick had torn from her crown. Notwithstanding her pious and Christian pretensions, she hated Frederick with her whole heart.

England had allied herself with Russia. France was at the moment too much occupied with the pageants which the lovely Marquise de Pompadour celebrated at Versailles, not to be in peace and harmony with all the world; yes, even with her natural enemy, Austria. Count Kaunitz, her ambassador at Paris, had, by his wise and adroit conduct, banished the cloud of mistrust which had so long lowered between these two powers.

This was the state of things at the close of the year 1775. Then was the general quiet interrupted by the distant echo of a cannon. Europe was startled, and rose up from her comfortable *siesta* to listen and inquire after the cause of this significant thunderbolt.

This roar of cannon, whose echo only had been heard, had its birth far, far away in America. The cannon, however, had been fired by a European power—by England, always distinguished for her calculating selfishness, which she wished the world to consider praiseworthy and honorable policy. England considered her mercantile interests in America endangered by France, and she thirsted with desire to have not only an East India but a West India company. The French colonies in America had long excited the envy and covetousness of England, and as a sufficient cause for war had utterly failed, she was bold enough to take the initiative without excuse!

In the midst of a general peace, and without any declaration of war, she seized upon a country lying on the borders of the Ohio River, and belonging to French Canada, made an attack upon some hundred merchant-ships, which were navigating the Ohio, under the protection of the ships-of-war, and took them as prizes.*

That was the cannon-shot which roused all Europe from her comfortable slumber and dreamy rest.

The Empress of Austria began to make warlike preparations in Bohemia, and to assemble her troops on the borders of Saxony and Bohemia. The Empress of Russia discontinued instantaneously her luxurious feasts and wild orgies, armed her soldiers, and placed them on the borders of Courland. She formed an immediate alliance with England, by which she bound herself to protect the territory of George II. in Germany, if attacked by France, in retaliation for the French merchant-ships taken by England on the Ohio River. Hanover, however, was excepted, as Frederick of Prussia might

* "Characteristics of the Important Events of the Seven Years' War," by Retson.

possibly give her his aid. For this promised aid, Russia received from England the sum of £150,000 sterling, which was truly welcome to the powerful Bestuchef, from the extravagant and pomp-loving minister of the queen.

Saxony also prepared for war, and placed her army on the borders of Prussia, for which she received a subsidy from Austria. This was as gladly welcomed by Count Brühl, the luxurious minister of King Augustus the Third of Poland and Saxony, as the English subsidy was by Bestuchef.

The King of France appeared to stand alone; even as completely alone as Frederick of Prussia. Every eye therefore was naturally fixed upon these two powers, who seemed thus forced by fate to extend the hand of fellowship to each other, and form such an alliance as England had done with Russia, and Austria with Saxony.

This contract between Prussia and France would have been the signal for a general war, for which all the powers of Europe were now arming themselves. But France did not extend her hand soon enough to obtain the friendship of Prussia. France distrusted Prussia, even as Austria, England, Russia, and Saxony distrusted and feared the adroit young adventurer, who in the last fifty years had placed himself firmly amongst the great powers of Europe, and was bold, brave, and wise enough to hold a powerful and self-sustained position in their circle.

France—that is to say, Louis the Fifteenth—France—that is to say, the Marquise de Pompadour, hated the King of Prussia manfully. By his bold wit he had often brought the French court and its immoralities into ridicule and contempt.

Austria and her minister Kaunitz and Maria Theresa hated Frederick of Prussia, because of his conquest of Silesia.

Russia—that is to say, Elizabeth and Bestuchef—hated the King of Prussia for the same reason with France. Frederick's cutting wit had scourged the manners of the Russian court, as it had humiliated and exposed the court of France.

Saxony—that is to say, Augustus the Third, and his minister, Count Brühl—hated Frederick from instinct, from envy, from resentment. This insignificant and small neighbor had spread her wings and made so bold a flight, that Saxony was completely overshadowed.

England hated no one, but she feared Prussia and France, and this fear led her to master the old-rooted national hatred to Russia, and form an alliance with her for mutual protection. But the English people did not share the fears of their king: they murmured over this Russian ally, and this discontent, which found expression

in Parliament, rang so loudly, that Frederick might well have heard it, and formed his own conclusions as to the result.

But did he hear it? Was the sound of his flute so loud? Was his study hermetically sealed, so that no echo from the outside world could reach his ears?

There was no interruption to his quiet, peaceful life; he hated nobody, made no warlike preparations; his soldiers exercised no more than formerly. Truly they exercised; and at the first call to battle, 150,000 men would be under arms.

But Frederick seemed not inclined to give this call; not inclined to exchange the calm pleasures of Sans-Souci for the rude noises of tents and battle-fields. He seemed to be in peaceful harmony with all nations. He was particularly friendly and conciliating toward the Austrian embassy; and not only was the ambassador, Count Peubla invited often to the royal table, but his secretary, Baron Weingarten, came also to Potsdam and Sans-Souci. The king appeared attached to him, and encouraged him to come often, to walk in the royal gardens.

Frederick was gracious and kind toward the officials of all the German powers. On one occasion, when the wife of Councillor Reichart, attached to the Saxon embassy, was confined, at Frederick's earnest wish, his private secretary, Eichel, stood as god-father to the child.*

In order to promote good feeling in Saxony, the king sent Count Mattzahn, one of the most eloquent cavaliers of the day, to the Dresden court; and so well supplied was he, that he dared compete in pomp and splendor with Count Brühl.

Frederick appeared to attach special importance to the friendship of Saxony, and with none of his foreign ambassadors was he engaged in so active a correspondence as with Mattzahn. It was said that these letters were of a harmless and innocent nature, relating wholly to paintings, which the count was to purchase from the Saxon galleries, or to music, which Frederick wished to obtain from amongst the collection of the dead Hesse, or to an Italian singer Frederick wished to entice to Berlin.

The world no longer favored Frederick's retirement. The less disposed he was to mingle in politics, the more Maria Theresa, Elizabeth of Russia, Augustus of Saxony, and the Marquise de Pompadour agitated the subject.

France had not forgotten that the contract between herself and Prussia was about to expire. She knew also that the subsidy money between England and Russia had not yet been voted by Parliament. It was therefore possible to reap some advantages from this point.

* "Characteristics of the Important Events of the Seven Years' War."

With this view, France sent the Duke de Nivernois as special ambassador to Berlin, to treat with the king as to the renewal of the old alliance.

The Duke de Nivernois came with a glittering suite to Berlin, and was received at the Prussian court with all the consideration which his rank and official character demanded. The grand master of ceremonies, Baron von Pöllnitz, was sent forward to meet him, and to invite him, in the name of the king, to occupy one of the royal palaces in Berlin.

Every room of the palace was splendidly decorated for the reception of the duke, and as soon as he arrived, two guards were placed before the house—a mark of consideration which the king had only heretofore given to reigning princes.

The duke accepted these distinguished attentions with lively gratitude, and pleaded for an immediate audience, in order to present his credentials.

Pöllnitz was commissioned to make all necessary arrangements, and agree with the duke as to the day and hour of the ceremony.

The king, who wished to give the French duke a proof of his consideration, intended that the presentation should be as imposing as possible, and all Berlin was to be witness of the friendship existing between the French and Prussian courts.

Upon the appointed day, a dazzling assemblage of equipages stood before the palace of the Duke de Nivernois. These were the royal festal carriages, intended for the members of the French embassy. Then followed a long line of carriages, occupied by the distinguished members of the Prussian court. Slowly and solemnly this pompous procession moved through the streets, and was received at the portal of the king's palace by the royal guard. Richly-dressed pages, in advance of whom stood the grand master of ceremonies with his golden staff, conducted the French ambassador to the White saloon, where the king, in all his royal pomp, and surrounded by the princes of his house, received him.

The solemn ceremony began; the duke drew near the throne, and, bowing his knee, handed his credentials to the king, who received them with a gracious smile.

The duke commenced his address; it was filled with flowery phrases, suited to the great occasion. Frederick listened with the most earnest attention, and his reply was kind, but dignified and laconic.

The public ceremony was over, and now came the important part of the audience, the confidential conversation. To this point the duke had looked with lively impatience; for this, indeed, had he been sent to Berlin.

The king descended from the throne, and laying aside all the solemnity of court etiquette, he approached the duke in the most gracious and genial manner, welcomed him heartily, and expressed his sincere delight at his arrival.

"Ah, sire," said the duke, with animation, how happy will my king be to learn that his ambassador has been so graciously received by your majesty!"

The king smiled. "I thought the ceremony was all over," said he, "and that I no longer spoke with the ambassador, but with the Duke de Nivernois, whom I know and love, and whose intellectual conversation will afford me a rare pleasure. Let us, therefore, chat together innocently, and forget the stiff ceremonies with which, I think, we have both been sufficiently burdened to-day. Tell me something of Paris, monsieur, of that lovely, enchanting, but over-bold coquette, Paris, whom the world adores while it ridicules, and imitates while it blames."

"Ah, sire, if I must speak of Paris, I must first tell you of my king—of my king, who wishes nothing more ardently than the renewal of the bond of friendship between your majesty and himself, and the assurance of its long continuance; who—"

"That is most kind of his majesty," said Frederick, interrupting him, "and I certainly share the friendly wishes of my exalted brother of France. But tell me now something of your learned men; how goes it with the Academy? do they still refuse Voltaire a seat, while so many unknown men have become academicians?"

"Yes, sire; these academicians are obstinate in their conclusions; and, as the Academy is a sort of republic, the king has no power to control them. If that were not so, my exalted master, King Louis, in order to be agreeable to your majesty, would exert all his influence, and—"

"Ah, sir," interrupted the king, "it is just and beautiful that the Academy is a free republic, which will not yield to the power and influence of the king. Art and science need for their blossom and growth freedom of thought and speech. Fate ordained that I should be born a king; but when alone in my study, alone with my books, I am fully content to be republican in the kingdom of letters. I confess the truth to you when, as a wise republican, I read thoughtfully in the pages of history, I sometimes come to the conclusion that kings and princes are unnecessary articles of luxury, and I shrug my shoulders at them rather contemptuously."

"And yet, sire, the arts need the protection of princes; that the republic of letters blooms and flourishes in a monarchy is shown in Prussia, where a royal republican and a republican king governs his people, and at the same time gives freedom of thought and speech

to science. France should be proud and happy that your majesty has adopted so many of her sons into your republic of letters; we dare, therefore, come to the conclusion that your majesty will not confine your interest wholly to them, but that this alliance between France and Prussia, which my king so earnestly desires and—"

"Unhappily," said the king, interrupting him eagerly, "the distinguished Frenchmen who have become my allies, are exactly those whom their strong-minded, fanatical mother, *La France*, has cast out from her bosom as dishonored sons. Voltaire lives in Ferney. Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom I admire but do not love, lives in Geneva, where he has been obliged to take refuge. I have also been told that the pension which, in a favorable moment, was granted to D'Alembert, has been withdrawn. Have I been falsely informed? has my friend D'Alembert not fallen into disgrace? is not my friend the encyclopædian, regarded as a transgressor, and a high traitor because he uses the undoubted right of free thought, does not blindly believe, but looks abroad with open eyes and a clear intellect?"

The duke replied by a few confused and disconnected words, and a shadow fell upon his clear countenance; three times had Frederick interrupted him when he sought to speak of the King of France and his friendship for his brother of Prussia. The duke did not dare choose this theme for the fourth time, which was so evidently distasteful to the king; he must, therefore, submit and follow the lead of his majesty, and in lieu of alliances and state questions discuss philosophy and the arts. So soon as the duke came to this conclusion, he smoothed his brow, and, with all his amiability, animation, and intelligence, he replied to the questions of the king, and the conversation was carried on in an unbroken stream of wit and gayety.

"At the next audience I will surely find an opportunity to speak of politics," said the duke to himself. "The king cannot always be so immovable as to-day."

But the second and the third audience came, and the king was as inexplicable as the first time; he conversed with the duke kindly and freely showed him the most marked attention and personal confidence; but so often as the duke sought to introduce the subject of politics and the public interests which had brought him to Berlin, the king interrupted him and led the conversation to indifferent subjects. This lasted two weeks, and the French court looked with painful anxiety for intelligence from the Duke de Nivernois that the old alliance was renewed and fully ratified, and she had, therefore, nothing to fear from Prussia. This uncertainty was no longer to be borne, and the duke determined to end it by a *coup d'état*.

He wrote, therefore, to the king, and asked for a private audi-

ence. To his great joy his request was granted; the king invited him to come the next day to Sans-Souci.

"At last! at last!" said the duke, drawing a long breath; and with proud, French assurance, he added, "To-morrow, then, we will renew this contract which binds the hands of Prussia, and gives France liberty of action."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIVATE AUDIENCE.

THE king received the French ambassador without ceremony. There were no guards, no pages, no swarms of curious listening courtiers, only a few of his trusty friends, who welcomed the duke and conversed with him, while Pöllnitz entered the adjoining room and informed the king of his arrival.

"His majesty entreats the duke to enter," said Pöllnitz, opening the door of the library. The king advanced. He was dressed simply; even the golden star, which was seldom absent from his coat, was now missing.

"Come, duke," said the king, pleasantly, "come into my *tusculum*." He then entered the library, quickly followed by the duke.

"Well, sir," said the king, "we are now in that room in which I lately told you I was but a republican. You have crossed the threshold of the republic of letters!"

"But I see a king before me," said the duke, bowing reverentially; "a king who has vanquished his republic, and surpassed all the great spirits that have gone before him."

The king's glance rested upon the shelves filled with books, on whose back glittered in golden letters the most distinguished names of all ages.

"Homer, Tacitus, Livy, Petrarch!—ye great spirits of my republic! hear how this traitor slanders you."

"How I honor you, sire, for truly it is a great honor to be subdued and vanquished by such a king as Frederick the Second."

The king looked at him fixedly. "You wish to bewilder me with flattery, duke," said he, "well knowing that it is a sweet opiate, acceptable to princes, generally causing their ruin. But in this chamber, duke, I am safe from this danger, and here in my republic we will both enjoy the Spartan soup of truth. Believe me, sir, it is at times a wholesome dish, though to the pampered stomach it is bitter and distasteful. I can digest it, and as you have come to visit me, you will have to partake of it."

"And I crave it, sire—crave it as a man who has fasted for two weeks."

"For two weeks?" said the king, laughing. "Ah, it is true you have been here just that time."

"For two long weeks has your majesty kept me fasting and longing for this precious soup," said the duke, reproachfully.

"My broth was not ready," said the king, gayly; "it was still bubbling in the pot. It is now done, and we will consume it together. Let us be seated, duke."

If Frederick had turned at this moment, he would have seen the grand chamberlain Pöllnitz advancing on tiptoe to the open door, in order to listen to the conversation. But the king was looking earnestly at the ambassador. After a few moments of silence, he turned to the duke.

"Is my soup still too hot for you?" said he, laughingly.

"No, sire," said the duke, bowing. "But I waited for your majesty to take the first spoonful. Would it not be better to close that door?"

"No," said the king, hastily; "I left it open, intentionally, so that your eyes, when wearied with the gloom of my republic, could refresh themselves on the glittering costumes of my courtiers."

"He left it open," thought the duke, "for these courtiers to hear all that is said. He wishes the whole world to know how he rejected the friendship of France."

"Well," said the king, "I will take my spoonful. We will commence without further delay. Duke de Nivernois, you are here because the contract made between France and Prussia is at an end, and because France wishes me to fancy that she is anxious for a renewal of this treaty, and for the friendship of Prussia."

"France wishes to convince you of this, sire," said the duke.

"Convince me?" said the king, ironically. "And how?"

"King Louis of France not only proposes to renew this contract, sire, but he wishes to draw the bonds of friendship much closer between France and Prussia."

"And to what end?" said the king. "For you well know, duke, that in politics personal inclinations must not be considered. Were it not so, I would, without further delay, grasp the friendly hand that my brother of France extends toward me, for the whole world knows that I love France, and am proud of the friendship of her great spirits. But as, unfortunately, there is no talk here of personal inclinations but of politics, I repeat my question. To what end does France desire the friendship of Prussia? What am I to pay for it? You see, duke, I am a bad diplomatist—I make no digression, but go to the point at once."

"And that, perhaps, is the nicest diplomacy," said the duke, sighing.

"But, duke, do tell me, why is France so anxious for the friendship of Prussia?"

"To have an ally in you and be your ally. By the first, France will have a trusty and powerful friend in Germany when her lands are attacked by the King of England; by the last, your majesty will have a trusty and powerful friend when Prussia is attacked by Russia or Austria."

"We will now speak of the first," said the king, quietly. "France, then, thinks to transplant this war with England to German ground?"

"Everywhere, sire, that the English colors predominate. England alone will be accountable for this war."

"It is true England has been hard upon you, but still it seems to me you have revenged yourselves sufficiently. When England made herself supreme ruler of the Ohio, France, by the conquest of the Isle of Minorca, obtained dominion over the Mediterranean Sea, thereby wounding England so deeply, that in her despair she turned her weapons against herself. Admiral Byng, having been overcome by your admiral Marquis de la Gallissionaire, paid for it with his life. I think France should be satisfied with this expiation."

"France will wash off her insults in English blood, and Minorca is no compensation for Canada and Ohio. England owes us satisfaction, and we will obtain it in Hanover."

"In Hanover?" repeated the king, angrily.

"Hanover will be ours, sire, though we had no such ally as Germany; but it will be ours the sooner if we have that help which you can give us. Standing between two fires, England will have to succumb, there will be no escape for her. That is another advantage, sire, that France expects from the treaty with Prussia. But I will now speak of the advantages which your majesty may expect from this alliance. You are aware that Prussia is surrounded by threatening enemies; that Austria and Russia are approaching her borders with evil intentions, and that a day may soon come when Maria Theresa may wish to reconquer this Silesia which, in her heart, she still calls her own. When this time comes, your majesty will not be alone; your ally, France, will be at your side; she will repay with faithful, active assistance the services which your majesty rendered her in Hanover. She will not only render her all the assistance in her power, but she will also allow her to partake of the advantages of this victory. Hanover is a rich land, not rich only in products, but in many other treasures. The Electors of Hanover have in their residences not only their chests filled with

gold and precious jewels, but also the most magnificent paintings. It is but natural that we should pay ourselves in Hanover for the expenses of this war of which England is the cause. You, then, will share with us these treasures. And still this is not all. France is grateful; she offers you, therefore, one of her colonies, the Isle of Tobago, as a pledge of friendship and love."

"Where is this isle?" said the king, quietly.

"In the West Indies, sire."

"And where is Hanover?"

The duke looked at the king in amazement, and remained silent.

The king repeated his question.

"Well," said the duke, hesitatingly, "Hanover is in Germany."

"And for this German land which, with my aid, France is to conquer, I am to receive as a reward the little Isle of Tobago in the West Indies! Have you finished, duke, or have you other propositions to make?"

"Sire, I have finished, and await your answer."

"And this answer, duke, shall be clearer and franker than your questions. I will begin by answering the latter part of your speech. Small and insignificant as the King of Prussia may appear in your eyes, I would have you know he is no robber, no highwayman; he leaves these brilliant amusements without envy to France. And now, my dear duke, I must inform you, that since this morning it has been placed out of my power to accept this alliance; for this morning a treaty was signed, by which I became the ally of England!"

"It is impossible, sire," cried the duke; "this cannot be!"

"Not possible, sir!" said the king, "and still it is true. I have formed a treaty with England—this matter is settled! I have been an ally of Louis XV.; I have nothing to complain of in him. I love him; well, am I now his enemy? I hope that there may be a time when I may again approach the King of France. Pray tell him how anxiously I look forward to this time. Tell him I am much attached to him."

"Ah, sire," said the duke, sighing, "it is a great misfortune. I dare not go to my monarch with this sad, unexpected news; my monarch who loves you so tenderly, whose most earnest wish it is for France to be allied to Prussia."

"Ah, duke," said Frederick, laughing, "France wishes for ships as allies. I have none to offer—England has. With her help I shall keep the Russians from Prussia, and with my aid she will keep the French from Hanover."

"We are to be enemies, then?" said the duke, sadly.

"It is a necessary evil, for which there is no remedy. But Louis

XV. can form other alliances," said Frederick, ironically. "It may be for his interest to unite with the house of Austria!"

The duke was much embarrassed.

"Your majesty is not in earnest," said he, anxiously.

"Why not, duke?" said Frederick; "an alliance between France and Austria—it sounds very natural. If I were in your place, I would propose this to my court."

He now rose, which was a sign to the duke that the audience was at an end.

"I must now send a courier at once to my court," said the duke, "and I will not fail to state that your majesty advises us to unite with Austria."

"You will do well; that is," said the king, with a meaning smile—"that is, if you think your court is in need of such advice, and has not already acted without it. When do you leave, duke?"

"To-morrow morning, sire."

"Farewell, duke, and do not forget that in my heart I am the friend of France, though we meet as enemies on the battle-field."

The duke bowed reverentially, and, sighing deeply, left the royal library, "the republic of letters," to hasten to Berlin.

The king looked after him thoughtfully.

"The die is cast," said he, softly. "There will be war! Our days of peace and quietude are over, and the days of danger are approaching!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAITOR.

THE sun had just risen, and was shedding its golden rays over the garden of Sans-Souci, decking the awaking flowers with glittering dew-drops. All was quiet—Nature alone was up and doing; no one was to be seen, no sound was to be heard, but the rustling of trees and the chirping of birds. All was still and peaceful; it seemed as if the sound of human misery and passion could not reach this spot. There was something so holy in this garden, that you could but believe it to be a part of paradise in which the serpent had not yet exercised his arts of seduction. But no, this is but a beautiful dream. Man is here, but he is sleeping; he is still resting from the toils and sorrows of the past day. Man is here!—he is coming to destroy the peacefulness of Nature with his sorrows and complaints.

The little gate at the farthest end of that shady walk is opened,

and a man enters. The dream is at an end, and Sans-Souci is now but a beautiful garden, not a paradise, for it has been desecrated by the foot of man. He hastens up the path leading to the palace; he hurries forward, panting and gasping. His face is colorless, his long hair is fluttering in the morning wind, his eyes are fixed and glaring; his clothes are covered with dust, and his head is bare.

There is something terrifying in the sudden appearance of this man. Nature seems to smile no more since he came; the trees have stopped their whispering, the birds cannot continue their melodious songs since they have seen his wild, anxious look. The peacefulness of Nature is broken. For man—that is to say, misery, misfortune; for man—that is to say, sin, guilt, and meanness—is there, pouring destroying drops of poison in the golden chalice of creation.

Breathlessly he hurries on, looking neither to right nor left. He has now reached the terrace, and now he stops for a moment to recover breath. He sees not the glorious panorama lying at his feet; he is blind to all but himself. He is alone in the world—alone with his misery, his pain. Now he hastens on to the back of the palace. The sentinels walking before the back and the front of the castle know him, know where he is going, and they barely glance at him as he knocks long and loudly at that little side window.

It is opened, and a young girl appears, who, when perceiving this pale, anxious countenance, which is striving in vain to smile at her, cries out loudly, and folds her hands as if in prayer.

"Hush!" said he, roughly; "hush! let me in."

"Some misfortune has happened!" said she, terrified.

"Yes, Rosa, a great misfortune; but let me in, if you do not wish to ruin me."

The young girl disappears, and the man hastens to the side door of the castle. It is opened, and he slips in.

Perfect peace reigns once more in the garden of Sans-Souci. Nature is now smiling, for she is alone with her innocence. Man is not there! But now, in the castle, in the dwelling of the castle warder, and in the room of his lovely daughter Rosa, all is alive. There is whispering, and weeping, and sighing, and praying; there is Rosa, fearful and trembling, her face covered with tears, and opposite her, her pale, woe-begone lover.

"I have been walking all night," said he, with a faint and hollow voice. "I did not know that Berlin was so far from Potsdam, and had I known it, I would not have dared to take a wagon or a horse; I had to slip away very quietly. While by Count Puebla's order my room was guarded, and I thought to be in it, I descended into the garden by the grape-vine, which reached up to my window. The gardener had no suspicions of how I came there, when I required

him to unlock the door, but laughed cunningly, thinking I was bound to some rendezvous. And so I wandered on in fear and pain, in despair and anger, and it seemed to me as if the road would never come to an end. At times I stopped, thinking I heard behind me wild cries and curses, the stamping of horses, and the rolling of wheels; but it was imagination. Ah! it was a frightful road; but it is past. But now I will be strong, for this concerns my name, my life, my honor. Why do you laugh, Rosa?" said he, angrily; "do you dare to laugh, because I speak of my name—my honor?"

"I did not laugh," said Rosa, looking with terror at the disturbed countenance of her lover.

"Yes, you laughed, and you were right to laugh, when I spoke of my honor; I who have no honor; I who have shamed my name; I upon whose brow is the sign of murder: for I am guilty of the ruin of a man, and the chains on his hands are cursing my name."

"My God! he is mad," murmured Rosa.

"No, I am not mad," said he, with a heart-breaking smile. "I know all, all! Were I mad, I would not be so unhappy. Were I unconscious, I would suffer less. But, no, I remember all. I know how this evil commenced, how it grew and poisoned my heart. The evil was my poverty, my covetousness, and perhaps also my ambition. I was not content to bear forever the chains of bondage; I wished to be free from want. I determined it should no more be said that the sisters of Count Weingarten had to earn their bread by their needlework, while he feasted sumptuously at the royal table. This it was that caused my ruin. These frightful words buzzed in my ears so long, that in my despair I determined to stop them at any price; and so I committed my first crime, and received a golden reward for my treason. My sisters did not work now; I bought a small house for them, and gave them all that I received. I shuddered at the sight of this money; I would keep none of it. I was again the poor secretary Weingarten, but my family was not helpless; they had nothing to fear."

To whom was he telling all this? Certainly not to that young girl standing before him, pale and trembling. He had forgotten himself; he had forgotten her whom in other days he had called his heart's darling.

As she sank at his feet and covered his hands with her tears, he rose hastily from his seat; he now remembered that he was not alone.

"What have I said?" cried he, wildly. "Why do you weep?"

"I weep because you have forgotten me," said she, softly; "I weep because, in accusing yourself, you make no excuse for your crime; not even your love for your poor Rosa."

"It is true," said he, sadly, "I had forgotten our love. And still it is the only excuse that I have for my second crime. I had determined to be a good man, and to expiate my one crime throughout my whole life. But when I saw you, your beauty fascinated me, and you drew me on. I went with open eyes into the net which you prepared for me, Rosa. I allowed myself to be allured by your beauty, knowing well that it would draw me into a frightful abyss."

"Ah," said Rosa, groaning, "how cruelly you speak of our love!"

"Of our love!" repeated he, shrugging his shoulders. "Child, in this hour we will be true to each other. Ours was no true love. You were in love with my noble name and position—I with your youth, your beauty, your coquettish ways. Our souls were not in unison. You gave yourself to me, not because you loved me, but because you wished to deceive me. I allowed myself to be deceived because of your loveliness and because I saw the golden reward which your deceitful love would bring me."

"You are cruel and unjust," said Rosa, sadly. "It may be true that you never loved me, but I loved you truly. I gave you my whole heart."

"Yes, and in giving it," said he, harshly—"in giving it you had the presence of mind to keep the aim of your tenderness always in view. While your arms were around me, your little hand which seemed to rest upon my heart, sought for the key which I always kept in my vest-pocket, and which I had lately told you belonged to the desk in which the important papers of the embassy were placed. You found this key, Rosa, and I knew it, but I only laughed, and pressed you closer to my heart."

"Terrible! terrible!" said Rosa, trembling. "He knew all, and still he let me do it!"

"Yes I allowed you to do it—I did not wish to be better than the girl I loved; and, as she desired to deceive me, I let myself be deceived. I allowed it, because the demon of gold had taken possession of me. I took the important papers out of my desk, to which you had stolen the key, and hid them. Then the tempters came and whispered of golden rewards, of eternal gratitude, of fortune, honor; and these fiendish whispers misled my soul. I sold my honor and became a traitor, and all this for the sake of gold! So I became what I now am. I do not reproach you, Rosa, for most likely it would have happened without you."

"But what danger threatens you now?" asked Rosa.

"The just punishment for a traitor," said he, hoarsely. "Give me some wine, Rosa, so that I can gain strength to go to the king at once."

"To the king at this early hour?"

"And why not? Have I not been with him often at this hour, when I had important news or dispatches to give him? So give me the wine, Rosa."

Rosa left the room, but returned almost instantly. He took the bottle from her and filled a glass hastily.

"Now," said he, breathing deeply, "I feel that I live again. My blood flows freely through my veins, and my heart is beating loudly. Now to the king!"

He stood before a glass for a moment to arrange his hair; then pressed a cold kiss upon Rosa's pale, trembling lips, and left the room. With a firm, sure tread, he hurried through the halls and chambers. No one stopped him, for no one was there to see him. In the king's antechamber sat Deesen taking his breakfast.

"Is the king up?" asked Weingarten.

"The sun has been up for hours, and so of course the king is up," said Deesen, proudly.

"Announce me to his majesty; I have some important news for him."

He entered the king's chamber, and returned in a few moments for Weingarten.

The king was sitting in an arm-chair by a window, which he had opened to breathe the fresh summer air. His white greyhound, Amalthea, lay at his feet, looking up at him with his soft black eyes. In his right hand the king held his flute.

"You are early, sir," said he, turning to Weingarten. "You must have very important news."

"Yes, sire, very important," said Weingarten, approaching nearer.

The king reached out his hand. "Give them to me," said he.

"Sire, I have no dispatches."

"A verbal message, then. Speak."

"Sire, all is lost; Count Puebla suspects me."

The king was startled for a moment, but collected himself immediately. "He suspects, but he is certain of nothing?"

"No, sire; but his suspicion amounts almost to certainty. Yesterday I was copying a dispatch which was to go that evening, and which was of the highest importance to your majesty, when I suddenly perceived Count Puebla standing beside me at my desk. He had entered my room very quietly, which showed that he had his suspicions, and was watching me. He snatched my copy from the desk and read it. 'For whom is this?' said he, in a threatening tone. I stammered forth some excuses; said that I intended writing a history, and that I took a copy of all dispatches for my work. He

would not listen to me. 'You are a traitor!' said he, in a thundering voice. 'I have suspected you for some time; I am now convinced of your treachery. You shall have an examination to-morrow; for to-night you will remain a prisoner in your room.' He then locked my desk, put the key in his pocket, and, taking with him the dispatch and my copy, left the room. I heard him lock it and bolt my door. I was a prisoner."

"How did you get out?" said the king.

"By the window, sire. And I flew here to throw myself at your majesty's feet, and to beg for mercy and protection."

"I promised you protection and help in case of your detection—I will fulfil my promise. What are your wishes. Let us see if they can be realized."

"Will your majesty give me some sure place of refuge where Count Puebla's threats cannot harm me?"

"You will remain here in the dwelling of the castle-warder until a suitable residence can be found for you. What next? What plans have you made for the future?"

"I would humbly beseech your majesty to give me some position in your land worthy of my station, such as your highness promised me."

"You remember too many of my promises," said the king, shrugging his shoulders.

"Your majesty will not grant me the promised position?" said Count Weingarten, tremblingly.

"I remember no such promise," said Frederick. "Men of your stamp are paid, but not rewarded. I have made use of your treachery; but you are, nevertheless, in my eyes a traitor, and I will have none such in my service."

"Then I am lost!" said Weingarten. "My honor, my good name, my future are annihilated."

"Your honor has been weighed with gold," said the king, sternly, "and I think I have already paid more for it than it was worth. Your good name, it is true, will be from now changed into a bad one; and your mother will have to blush when she uses it. Therefore I advise you to let it go; to take another name; to begin a new existence, and to found a new future."

"A future without honor, without name, without position!" sighed Weingarten, despairingly.

"So are men!" said the king, softly; "insolent and stubborn when they think themselves secure; cowardly and uncertain when they are in danger. So you were rash enough to think that your treacherous deeds would always remain a secret? You did not think of a possible detection, or prepare yourself for it. In treading the road which you have trodden, every step should be considered.

This, it seems to me, you have not done. You wish to enjoy the fruits of your treachery in perfect security; but you have not the courage to stand before the world as a traitor. Do away with this name, which will cause you many dangers and insults. Fly from this place, where you and your deeds are known. Under a different name look for an asylum in another part of my land. Money shall not fail you; and if what you have earned from me is not sufficient, turn to me, and I will lend you still more. I will not forget that to me your treachery has been of great use, and therefore I will not desert you, though I shall despise the traitor. And now, farewell! This is our last meeting. Call this afternoon upon my treasurer; he will pay you two hundred louis d'or. And now go." And with a scornful look at Weingarten's pale countenance, he turned to the window.

Weingarten hurried past the halls and chambers, and entered Rosa's room. She read in his pale, sad face that he had no good news to tell her.

"Has it all been in vain?" said she, breathlessly.

"In vain?" cried he, with a scornful smile. "No, not in vain. The king rewarded me well; much better than Judas Iscariot was rewarded. I have earned a large sum of money, and am still to receive a thousand crowns. Quiet yourself, Rosa; we will be very happy, for we will have money. Only I must ask if the proud daughter of the royal castle-warder will give her hand to a man who can offer her no name, no position. Rosa, I warn you, think well of what you do. You loved me because I was a count, and had position to offer you. From to-day, I have no position, no name, no honor, no family. Like Ahasuerus, I will wander wearily through the world, happy and thanking God if I can find a quiet spot where I am not known, and my name was never heard. There I will rest, and trust to chance for a name. Rosa, will you share with me this existence, without sunshine, without honor, without a name?"

She was trembling so, that she could barely speak.

"I have no choice," stammered she, at last; "I must follow you, for my honor demands that I should be your wife. I must go with you; fate wills it."

With a loud shriek she fainted by his side. Weingarten did not raise her; he glanced wildly at the pale, lifeless woman at his feet.

"We are both condemned," murmured he, "we have both lost our honor. And with this Cain's mark upon our foreheads we will wander wearily through the world." *

* Count Weingarten escaped from all his troubles happily. He married his sweetheart, the daughter of the castle-warder, and went to Altmark, where, under the name of Veis, he lived happily for many years.

The king, in the mean while, after Weingarten had left him, walked thoughtfully up and down his room. At times he raised his head and gazed with a proud, questioning glance at the sky. Great thoughts were at work within him. Now Frederick throws back his head proudly, and his eyes sparkle.

"The time has come," said he, in a loud, full voice. "The hour for delay is past; now the sword must decide between me and my enemies." He rang a bell hastily, and ordered a valet to send a courier at once to Berlin, to call General Winterfeldt, General Retzow, and also Marshal Schwerin, to Sans-Souci.

CHAPTER VIII.

DECLARATION OF WAR.

A FEW hours after the departure of the courier, the heavy movement of wheels in the court below announced to the king, who was standing impatiently at his window, the arrival of the expected generals. In the same moment, his chamberlain, opening wide the library door, ushered them into his presence.

"Ah!" said the king, welcoming them pleasantly, "I see I am not so entirely without friends as my enemies think. I have but to call, and Marshal Schwerin, that is, wisdom and victory, is at my side; and Generals Winterfeldt and Retzow, that is, youth and courage, boldness and bravery, are ready to give me all the assistance in their power. Sirs, I thank you for coming to me at once. Let us be seated; listen to what I have to say, and upon what earnest important subjects I wish your advice."

And in a few words the king first showed them the situation of Europe and of his own states, so as to prepare them for the more important subjects he had to introduce before them.

"You will now understand," said he, "why I was so willing to make this contract with England. I hoped thereby to gain Russia, who is allied to England, to my side. But these hopes have been destroyed. Russia, angry with Britain for having allied herself to Prussia, has broken her contract. Bestuchef, it is true, wavered for a moment between his love of English guineas and his hatred of me, but hate carried the day."

"But, sire," said Retzow, hastily, "if your majesty can succeed in making a reconciliation between France and England, you may become the ally of these two powerful nations. Then let Austria, Russia, and Saxony come upon us all at once, we can confront them."

"We can do that, I hope, even without the assistance of France,"

said the king, impetuously. "We must renounce all idea of help from France; she is allied to Austria. What Kaunitz commenced with his wisdom, Maria Theresa carried out with her flattery. All my enemies have determined to attack me at once. But I am ready for them, weapons in hand. I have been hard at work; all is arranged, every preparation for the march of our army is finished. And now I have called you together to counsel me as to where we can commence our attack advantageously."

Frederick stopped speaking, and gazed earnestly at his generals, endeavoring to divine their thoughts. Marshal Schwerin was looking silently before him; a dark cloud rested upon General Retzow's brow; but the young, handsome face of Winterfeldt was sparkling with delight at the thought of war.

"Well, marshal," said the king, impatiently, "what is your advice?"

"My advice, sire," said the old marshal, sighing; "I see my king surrounded by threatening and powerful foes; I see him alone in the midst of all these allied enemies. For England may, perchance, send us money, but she has no soldiers for us, and moreover, we must assist her to defend Hanover. I cannot counsel this war, for mighty enemies are around us, and Prussia stands alone."

"No," said Frederick, solemnly, "Prussia stands not alone!—a good cause and a good sword are her allies, and with them she will conquer. And now, General Retzow, let us have your opinion."

"I agree entirely with Marshal Schwerin," said Retzow. "Like him, I think Prussia should not venture into this strife, because she is too weak to withstand such powerful adversaries."

"You speak prudently," said Frederick, scornfully. "And now, Winterfeldt, are you also against this war?"

"No, sire," cried Winterfeldt, "I am for the attack, and never were circumstances more favorable than at present. Austria has as yet made no preparations for war; her armies are scattered, and her finances are in disorder; and now it will be an easy task to attack her and subdue her surprised army."

The king looked at him pleasantly, and turning to the other generals, said quietly:

"We must not be carried away by the brave daring of this youth; he is the youngest among us, and is, perhaps, misled by enthusiasm. But we old ones must reflect; and I wished to convince you that I had not failed to do this. But all has been in vain."

"Now is the time," said Winterfeldt, with sparkling eyes, "to convince the crippled, unwieldy Austrian eagle that the young eagle of Prussia has spread her wings, and that her claws are strong enough to grasp all her enemies and hurl them into an abyss."

"And if the young eagle, in spite of his daring, should have to succumb to the superiority of numbers," said Marshal Schwerin, sadly. "If the balls of his enemies should break his wings, thereby preventing his flight for the future? Were it not better to avoid this possibility, and not to allow the whole world to say that Prussia, out of love of conquest, began a fearful war, which she could have avoided?"

"There is no reason in this war," said General Retzow; "for, though Austria, Saxony, and Russia are not our friends, they have not shown as yet by any open act that they are our enemies; and though Austria's alliance with France surprised the world, so also did Prussia's alliance with England. Our soldiers will hardly know why they are going to battle, and they will be wanting in that inspiration which is necessary to excite an army to heroic deeds."

"Inspiration shall not be wanting, and my army as well as yourselves shall know the many causes we have for this war. The reasons I have given you as yet have not satisfied you? Well, then, I will give you others; and, by Heaven, you will be content with them! You think Austria's unkindly feelings to Prussia have not been shown by any overt act. I will now prove to you that she is on the point of acting." And Frederick, lifting up some papers from his desk, continued: "These papers will prove to you, what you seem determined not to believe, namely, that Saxony, Russia, and France are prepared to attack Prussia with their combined forces, and to turn the kingdom of Prussia into a margraviate once more. These papers are authentic proofs of the dangers which hover over us. I will now inform you how I came by them, so that you may be convinced of their genuineness. For some time I have suspected that there was, amongst my enemies, an alliance against me, and that they had formed a contract in which they had sworn to do all in their power to destroy Prussia. I only needed to have my suspicions confirmed, and to have the proofs of this contract in my hands. There proofs were in the Saxon archives, and in the dispatches of the Austrian embassy. It was therefore necessary to get the key of these archives, and to have copies of these dispatches. I succeeded in doing both, Chance, or if you prefer it, a kind Providence, came to my aid. The Saxon chancellor, Reinitz, a former servant of General Winterfeldt, came from Dresden to Potsdam to look for Winterfeldt and to confide to him that a friend of his, Chancellor Minzel of Dresden, had informed him that the state papers interchanged between the court of Vienna and Dresden were kept in the Dresden archives, of which he had the key. Winterfeldt brought me this important message. Reinitz conducted the first negotiations with Menzel, which I then delivered into the

hands of my ambassador in Dresden, Count Mattzahn. Menzel was poor and covetous. He was therefore easily to be bribed. For three years Mattzahn has received copies of every dispatch that passed between the three courts. I am quite as well informed of all negotiations between Austria and France, for the secretary of the Austrian legation of this place, a Count Weingarten, gave me, for promises and gold, copies of all dispatches that came from Vienna and were forwarded to France. You see the corruption of man has borne me good fruit, and that gold is a magic wand which reveals all secrets. And now, let us cast a hasty glance over these papers which I have obtained by the aid of treachery and bribery."

He took one of the papers and spread it before the astonished generals. "You see here," he continued, "a sample of all other negotiations. It is a copy of a share contract which the courts of Vienna and Dresden formed in 1745. They then regarded the decline of Prussia as so sure an occurrence that they had already divided amongst themselves the different parts of my land. Russia soon affixed her name also to this contract, and here in this document you will see that these three powers have sworn to attack Prussia at the same moment, and that for this conquest, each one of the named courts was to furnish sixty thousand men."

While the generals were engaged in reading these papers, the king leaned back in his arm-chair, gazing keenly at Retzow and Schwerin. He smiled gayly as he saw Schwerin pressing his lips tightly together, and trying in vain to suppress a cry of rage, and Retzow clinching his fists vehemently.

When the papers had been read, and Schwerin was preparing to speak, the king, with his head thrown proudly back, and gazing earnestly at his listeners, interrupted him, saying:

"Now, sirs, perhaps you see the dangers by which we are surrounded. Under the circumstances, I owe it to myself, to my honor, and to the security of my land, to attack Austria and Saxony, and so to nip their abominable designs in the bud, before their allies are ready to give them any assistance. I am prepared, and the only question to be answered before setting our army in motion, is where to commence the attack to our advantage? For the deciding of this question, I have called you together. I have finished and now, Marshal Schwerin, it is your turn."

The old gray warrior arose. It may be that he was convinced by the powerful proofs and words of the king, or that knowing that his will was law it were vain to oppose him, but he was now as strongly for war as the king or Winterfeldt.

"If there is to be war," said he, enthusiastically, "let us start tomorrow, take Saxony, and, in that land of corn, build magazines

for the holding of our provisions, so as to secure a way for our future operations in Bohemia."

"Ah! now I recognize my old Schwerin," said the king, gayly pressing the marshal's hand. "No more delay! 'To anicipate' is my motto, and shall, God willing, be Prussia's in future."

"And our army," said Winterfeldt, with sparkling eyes, "has been accustomed, for hundreds of years, not only to defend themselves, but also to attack. Ah, at last it is to be granted us to fight our arch-enemies in open field, mischief-making Austria, intriguing Saxony, barbarous Russia, and finally lying, luxurious France, and to convince them that, though we do not fear their anger, we share their hatred with our whole hearts."

"And you, Retzow," said the king, sternly, turning to the general, who was sitting silently with downcast head; "do your views coincide with Schwerin's? Or do you still think it were better to wait?"

"Yes, sire," said Retzow, sadly; "I think delay, under the present threatening circumstances, would be the wisest course; I—"

He was interrupted by the entrance of a valet, who approached the king, and whispered a few words to him.

Frederick turned smilingly to the generals. "The princes, my brothers, have arrived," said he; "they were to be here at this hour to hear the result of our consultation. And, it strikes me, they arrive at the right moment. The princes may enter."

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING AND HIS BROTHERS.

THE door was thrown open and the princes entered. First came the Prince of Prussia, whose pale, dejected countenance was to-day paler and sadder than usual. Then Prince Henry, whose quick, bright eyes were fixed inquiringly on General Retzow. The general shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head. Prince Henry must have understood these movements, for his brow became clouded, and a deep red suffused his countenance. The king, who had seen this, laughed mockingly, and let the princes approach very close to him, before addressing them.

"Sirs," said he, "I have called you here, because I have some important news to communicate. The days of peace are over, and war is at hand!"

"War! and with whom?" said the Prince of Prussia, earnestly.

"War with our enemies!" cried the king. "War with those who

have sworn Prussia's destruction. War with Austria, France, Saxony, and Russia!"

"That is impossible, my brother," cried the prince, angrily. "You cannot dream of warring against such powerful nations. You cannot believe in the possibility of victory. Powerful and mighty as your spirit is it will have to succumb before the tremendous force opposed to it. Oh! my brother! my king! be merciful to yourself, to us, to our country. Do not desire the impossible! Do not venture into the stormy sea of war, to fight with your frail barks against the powerful men of war that your enemies will direct against you. We cannot be victorious! Preserve to your country your own precious life, and that of her brave sons."

The king's eyes burned with anger; they were fixed with an expression of deep hatred upon the prince.

"Truly, my brother," said he, in a cold, cutting tone, "fear has made you eloquent. You speak as if inspired."

A groan escaped the prince, and he laid his hand unwittingly upon his sword. He was deadly pale, and his lips trembled so violently, that he could scarcely speak.

"Fear!" said he, slowly. "That is an accusation which none but the king would dare to bring against me, and of which I will clear myself, if it comes to this unhappy war which your majesty proposes, and which I now protest against, in the name of my rights, my children, and my country."

"And I," said Prince Henry, earnestly—"I also protest against this war! Have pity on us, my king. Much as I thirst for renown and glory, often as I have prayed to God to grant me an occasion to distinguish myself, I now swear to subdue forever this craving for renown, if it can only be obtained at the price of this frightful, useless war. You stand alone! Without allies, it is impossible to conquer. Why, then, brave certain ruin and destruction?"

The king's countenance was frightful to look at; his eyes were flashing with rage, and his voice was like thunder, it was so loud and threatening.

"Enough of this!" said he; "you were called here, not to advise, but to receive my commands. The brother has heard you patiently, but now the King of Prussia stands before you, and demands of you obedience and submission. We are going to battle; this is settled; and your complaints and fears will not alter my determination. But all those who fear to follow me on the battle-field, have my permission to remain at home, and pass their time in love idyls. Who, amongst you all, prefers this? Let him speak, and he shall follow his own inclinations."

"None of us could do that," said Prince Henry, passionately.

"If the King of Prussia calls his soldiers, they will all come and follow their chieftain joyfully, though they are marching to certain death. I have already given you my personal opinion; it now rests with me to obey you, as a soldier, as a subject. This I will do joyfully, without complaining."

"I also," said Prince Augustus William, earnestly. "Like my brother, I will know how to subdue my own opinions and fears, and to follow in silent obedience my king and my chieftain."

The king threw a glance of hatred upon the pale, disturbed countenance of the prince.

"You will go where I command you," said he, sharply; and not giving the prince time to answer, he turned abruptly to Marshal Schwerin.

"Well, marshal, do you wish for a furlough, during this war? You heard me say I would refuse it to no one."

"I demand nothing of your majesty, but to take part in the first battle against your enemies. I do not ask who they are. The hour for consultation is past; it is now time to act. Let us to work, and that right quickly."

"Yes, to battle, sire," cried Retzow, earnestly. "As soon as your majesty has said that this war is irrevocable, your soldiers must have no further doubts, and they will follow you joyfully, to conquer or to die."

"And you, Winterfeldt," said the king, taking his favorite's hand tenderly; "have you nothing to say? Or have the Prince of Prussia's fears infected you, and made of you a coward?"

"Ah, no! sire," said Winterfeldt, pressing the king's hand to his breast; "how could my courage fail, when it is Prussia's hero king that leads to battle? How can I be otherwise than joyous and confident of victory, when Frederick calls us to fight against his wicked and arrogant enemies? No! I have no fears; God and the true cause is on our side."

Prince Henry approached nearer to the king, and looking at him proudly, he said.

"Sire, you asked General Winterfeldt if he shared the Prince of Prussia's fears. He says no; but I will beg your majesty to remember, that I share entirely the sentiments of my dear and noble brother."

As he finished, he threw an angry look at General Winterfeldt. The latter commenced a fierce rejoinder, but was stopped by the king.

"Be still, Winterfeldt," he said; "war has as yet not been declared, and till then, let there at least be peace in my own house." Then approaching Prince Henry, and laying his hand on his shoulder, he said kindly: "We will not exasperate each other, my brother.

You have a noble, generous soul, and no one would dare to doubt your courage. It grieves me that you do not share my views as to the necessity of this war, but I know that you will be a firm, helpful friend, and share with me my dangers, my burdens, and if God wills it, also my victory."

"Not I alone will do this," cried Prince Henry, "but also my brother, Augustus William, the Prince of Prussia, whose heart is not less brave, whose courage—"

"Hush, Henry! I pray you," said the Prince of Prussia, sadly; "speak not of my courage. By defending it, it would seem that it had been doubted, and that is a humiliation which I would stand from no one."

The king appeared not to have heard these words. He took some papers from the table by which he was standing, and said:

"All that remains to be told you now, is that I agree with Marshal Schwerin. We will commence the attack in Saxony. To Saxony, then, gentlemen! But, until the day before the attack, let us keep even the question of war a secret."

Then, with the paper under his arm, he passed through the saloon and entered his library.

There was a long pause after he left. The Prince of Prussia, exhausted by the storm which had swept over his soul, had withdrawn to one of the windows, where he was hid from view by the heavy satin damask curtains.

Prince Henry, standing alone in the middle of the room, gazed after his brother, and a deep sigh escaped him. Then turning to Retzow, he said:

"You would not, then, fulfil my brother's and my own wishes?"

"I did all that was in my power, prince," said the general, sighing. "Your highness did not wish this war to take place; you desired me, if the king asked for my advice, to tell him that we were too weak, and should therefore keep the peace. Well, I said this, not only because you desired it, but because it was also my own opinion. But the king's will was unalterable. He has meditated this war for years. Years ago, with Winterfeldt's aid, he drew all the plans and made every other arrangement."

"Winterfeldt!" murmured the prince to himself, "yes, Winterfeldt is the fiend whose whispers have misled the king. We suspected this long ago, but we had to bear it in silence, for we could not prevent it."

And giving his passionate nature full play, he approached General Winterfeldt, who was whispering to Marshal Schwerin.

"You can rejoice, general," said the prince, "for now you can take your private revenge on the Empress of Russia."

Winterfeldt encountered the prince's angry glance with a quiet, cheerful look.

"Your highness does me too much honor in thinking that a poor soldier, such as I am, could be at enmity with a royal empress. What could this Russian empress have done to me, that could call for revenge on my part?"

"What has she done to you?" said the prince, with a mocking smile. "Two things, which man finds hardest to forgive! She outwitted you, and took your riches from you. Ah! general, I fear this war will be in vain, and that you will not be able to take your wife's jewels from St. Petersburg, where the empress retains them."

Winterfeldt subdued his anger, and replied: "You have related us a beautiful fairy tale, prince, a tale from the Arabian Nights, in which there is a talk of jewels and glorious treasures, only that in this tale, instead of the usual dragon, an empress guards them. I acknowledge that I do not understand your highness."

"But I understand you perfectly, general. I know your ambitious and proud plans. You wish to make your name renowned. General, I consider you are much in fault as to this war. You were the king's confidant—you had your spies everywhere, who, for heavy rewards, imparted to you the news by which you stimulated the king."

"If in your eyes," said Winterfeldt, proudly, "it is wrong to spend your gold to find out the intrigues of your own, your king's, and your country's enemies, I acknowledge that I am in fault, and deserve to be punished. Yes, everywhere I have had my spies, and thanks to them, the king knows Saxony's, Austria's, and Russia's intentions. I paid these spies with my own gold. Your highness may thus perceive that I am not entirely dependent on those jewels of my wife which are said to be in the Empress of Russia's possession."

At this moment the Prince of Prussia, who had been a silent witness to this scene, approached General Winterfeldt.

"General," said he, in a loud, solemn voice, "you are the cause of this unfortunate war which will soon devastate our poor land. The responsibility falls upon your head, and woe to you if this war, caused by your ambition, should be the ruin of our beloved country! I would, if there were no punishment for you on earth, accuse you before the throne of God, and the blood of the slaughtered sons of my country, the blood of my future subjects, would cry to Heaven for revenge! Woe to you if this war should be the ruin of Prussia!" repeated Prince Henry. "I could never forgive that; I would hold your ambition responsible for it, for you have access to the king's heart, and instead of dissipating his distrust against these foreign

nations, you have endeavored to nourish it—instead of softening the king's anger, you have given it fresh food."

"What I have done," cried Winterfeldt, solemnly rasing his right hand heavenward—"what I have done was done from a feeling of duty, from love of my country, and from a firm, unshaken trust in my king's star, which cannot fade, but must become ever more and more resplendent! May God punish me if I have acted from other and less noble motives!"

"Yes, may God punish you—may He not revenge your crime upon our poor country!" said Prince Augustus William. "I have said my last upon this sad subject. From now on, my private opinions are subdued—I but obey the king's commands. What he requires of me shall be done—where he sends me I will go, without questioning or considering, but quietly and obediently, as it becomes a true soldier. I hope that you, my brother, Marshal Schwerin, and General Retzow, will follow my example. The king has commanded—we have but to obey cheerfully."

Then, arm in arm, the princes left the audience-room and returned to Berlin.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAUREL-BRANCH.

WHILE this last scene was passing in the audience-room, the king had retired to his study, and was walking up and down in deep thought. His countenance was stern and sorrowful—a dark cloud was upon his brow—his lips were tightly pressed together—powerful emotions were disturbing his whole being. He stopped suddenly, and raising his head proudly, seemed to be listening to the thoughts and suggestions of his soul.

"Yes," said he, "these were his very words: 'I protest against this war in the name of my rights, my children, and my country!' Ah, it is a pleasant thought to him that he is to be heir to my throne. He imagines that he has rights beyond those that I grant him, and that he can protest against an action of mine! He is a rebel, a traitor. He dares to think of the time when I will be gone—of the time when he or his children will wear this crown! I feel that I hate him as my father hated me because I was his heir, and because the sight of me always reminded him of his death! Yes, I hate him! The effeminate boy will disturb the great work which I am endeavoring to pefrorm. Under his weak hands, this Prussia, which I would make great and powerful, will fall to pieces, and all

my battles and conquests will be in vain. He will not know how to make use of them. I will make of my Prussia a mighty and much-feared nation. And if I succeed, by giving up my every thought to this one object, then my brother will come and destroy this work which has cost me such pain and trouble. Prussia needs a strong, active king, not an effeminate boy who passes his life in sighing for his lost love and in grumbling at fate for making him the son of a king. Yes, I feel that I hate him, for I foresee that he will be the destroyer of my great work. But no, no—I do him wrong," said the king, "and my suspicious heart sees, perhaps, things that are not. Ah, has it gone so far? Must I, also, pay the tribute which princes give for their pitiful splendor? I suspect the heir to my throne, and see in him a secret enemy! Mistrust has already thrown her shadow upon my soul, and made it dark and troubled. Ah, there will come a cold and dreary night for me, when I shall stand alone in the midst of all my glory!"

His head fell upon his breast, and he remained silent and immovable.

"And am I not alone, now?" said he, and in his voice there was a soft and sorrowful sound. "My brothers are against me, because they do not understand me; my sisters fear me, and, because this war will disturb their peace and comfort, will hate me. My mother's heart has cooled toward me, because I will not be influenced by her; and Elizabeth Christine, whom the world calls my wife, weeps in solitude over the heavy chains which bind her. Not one of them loves me!—not one believes in me, and in my future!"

The king, given up to these melancholy thoughts, did not hear a knock at his door; it was now repeated, and so loudly, that he could not but hear it. He hastened to the door and opened it. Winterfeldt was there, with a sealed paper in his hand, which he gave to the king, begging him at the same time to excuse this interruption.

"It is the best thing you could have done," said the king, entering his room, and signing to the general to follow him. "I was in bad company, with my own sorrowful thoughts, and it is good that you came to dissipate them."

"This letter will know well how to do that," said Winterfeldt, handing him the packet; "a courier brought it to me from Berlin."

"Letters from my sister Wilhelmina, from Italy," said the king, joyfully breaking the seal, and unfolding the papers.

There were several sheets of paper closely written, and between them lay a small, white packet. The king kept the latter in his hand, and commenced reading eagerly. As he read, the dark, stern expression gradually left his countenance. His brow was smooth and calm, and a soft, beautiful smile played about his lips. He

finished the letter, and throwing it hastily aside, tore open the package. In it was a laurel-branch, covered with beautiful leaves, which looked as bright and green as if they had just been cut. The king raised it, and looked at it tenderly.

"Ah, my friend," said he, with a beaming smile, "see how kind Providence is to me! On this painful day she sends me a glorious token, a laurel-branch. My sister gathered it for me on my birthday. Do you know where, my friend? Bow your head, be all attention; for know that it is a branch from the laurel-tree that grows upon Virgil's grave! Ah, my friend, it seems to me as if the great and glorious spirits of the olden ages were greeting me with this laurel which came from the grave of one of their greatest poets. My sister sends it to me, accompanied by some beautiful verses of her own. An old fable says that these laurels grew spontaneously upon Virgil's grave, and that they are indestructible. May this be a blessed omen for me! I greet you, Virgil's holy shadow! I bow down before you, and kiss in all humility your ashes, which have been turned into laurels!"

Thus speaking, the king bowed his head, and pressed a fervent kiss upon the laurel. He then handed it to Winterfeldt.

"Do likewise, my friend," said he; "your lips are worthy to touch this holy branch, to inhale the odor of these leaves which grew upon Virgil's grave. Kiss this branch—and now let us swear to become worthy of this kiss; swear that in this war, which will soon begin, laurels shall either rest upon our brows or upon our graves!"

Winterfeldt having sworn, repeated these words after him.

"Amen!" said the king; "God and Virgil have heard us."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BALL AT COUNT BRÜHL'S.

COUNT BRÜHL, first minister to the King of Saxony, gave to-day a magnificent *fête* in his palace, in honor of his wife, whose birthday it was. The feast was to be honored by the presence of the King of Poland, the Prince Elector of Saxony, Augustus III., and Maria Josephine, his wife. This was a favor which the proud queen granted to her favorite for the first time. For she who had instituted there the stern Spanish etiquette to which she had been accustomed at the court of her father, Joseph I., had never taken a meal at the table of one of her subjects; so holy did she consider her royal person, that the ambassadors of foreign powers were not per-

mitted to sit at the same table with her. Therefore, at every feast at the court of Dresden, there was a small table set apart for the royal family, and only the prime minister, Count Brühl, was deserving of the honor to eat with the king and queen. This was a custom which pleased no one so well as the count himself, for it insured him from the danger that some one might approach the royal pair, and inform them of some occurrence of which the count wished them to remain in ignorance.

There were many slanderers in this wretched kingdom—many who were envious of the count's high position—many who dared to believe that the minister employed the king's favor for his own good, and not for that of his country. They said that he alone lived luxuriously in this miserable land, while the people hungered; that he spent every year over a million of thalers. They declared that he had not less than five millions now lying in the banks of Rotterdam, Venice, and Marseilles; others said that he had funds to the amount of seven millions. One of these calumniators might possibly approach the king's table and whisper into the royal ear his wicked slanders; one of these evil-doers might even have the audacity to make his unrighteous complaints to the queen. This it was that caused Count Brühl to tremble; this it was that robbed him of sleep at night, of peace by day, this fear of a possible disgrace.

He was well acquainted with the history of Count Lerma, minister to King Philip IV. of Spain. Lerma was also the ruler of a king, and reigned over Spain, as Brühl over Saxony. All had succumbed to his power and influence, even the royal family trembled when he frowned, and felt themsleves honored by his smile. What was it that caused the ruin of this all-powerful, irreproachable favorite? A little note which King Philip found between his napkin one day, upon which was this address: "To Philip IV., once King of Spain, and Master of both the Indies, but now in the service of Count Lerma!" This it was that caused the count's ruin; Philip was enraged by this note, and the powerful favorite fell into disgrace.

Count Brühl knew this history, and was on his guard. He knew that even the air which he breathed was poisoned by the malice of his enemies; that those who paused in the streets to greet him reverentially when he passed in his gilded carriage, cursed him in their inmost hearts; that those friends who pressed his hand and sung songs in his praise, would become his bitterest enemies so soon as he ceased paying for their friendship with position, with pensions, with honors, and with orders. He spent hundreds of thousands yearly to gain friends and admirers, but still he was in constant fear that some enemy would undermine him. This had indeed once happened. During the time that the king's favor was shared equally

with Count Brühl, Count Sulkovsky, and Count Hennicke, whilst playing cards, a piece of gold was given to the king, upon which was represented the crown of Poland, resting upon the shoulders of three men, with the following inscription: "There are three of us, two pages and one lackey!"

The King of Poland was as much enraged by this satirical piece of gold as was the King of Spain by his satirical note. But Count Brühl succeeded in turning the king's anger upon the two other shoulder-bearers of his crown. Counts Sulkovsky and Hennicke fell into disgrace, and were banished from the court; Count Brühl remained, and reigned as absolute master over Poland and Saxony!

But reigning, he still trembled, and therefore he favored the queen's fancy for the strictest etiquette; therefore, no one but Count Brühl was to eat at the royal table; he himself took their napkins from their plates and handed them to the royal couple; no one was to approach the sovereigns who was not introduced by the prime minister, who was at once master of ceremonies, field-marshal, and grand chamberlain, and received for each of these different posts a truly royal salary. Etiquette and the fears of the powerful favorite kept the royal pair almost prisoners.

But for to-day etiquette was to be done away with; the crowned heads were to be gracious, so as to lend a new glory to their favorite's house. To-day the count was fearless, for there was no danger of a traitor being among his guests. His wife and himself had drawn up the list of invitations. But still, as there might possibly be those among them who hated the count, and would very gladly injure him, he had ordered some of the best paid of his friends to watch all suspicious characters, not to leave them alone for a moment, and not to overlook a single word of theirs. Of course, it was understood that the count and his wife must remain continually at the side of the king and queen, that all who wished to speak to them must first be introduced by the host or hostess.

The count was perfectly secure to-day, and therefore gay and happy. He had been looking at the different arrangements for this feast, and he saw with delight that they were such as to do honor to his house. It was to be a summer festival: the entire palace had been turned into a greenhouse, that served only for an entrance to the actual scene of festivities. This was the immense garden. In the midst of the rarest and most beautiful groups of flowers, immense tents were raised; they were of rich, heavy silk, and were festooned at the sides with golden cords and tassels. Apart from these was a smaller one, which outshone them all in magnificence. The roof of this tent rested upon eight pillars of gold; it was composed of a dark-red velvet, over which a slight gauze, worked with

gold and silver stars, was gracefully arranged. Upon the table below this canopy, which rested upon a rich Turkish carpet, there was a heavy service of gold, and the most exquisite Venetian glass; the immense pyramid in the middle of the table was a master-work of Benevenuto Cellini, for which the count had paid in Rome one hundred thousand thalers. There were but seven seats, for no one was to eat at this table but the royal pair, the prince-elector and his wife, the Prince Xavier, and the Count and Countess Brühl. This was a new triumph that the count had prepared for himself; he wished his guests to see the exclusive royal position he occupied. And no one could remain in ignorance of this triumph, for from every part of the garden the royal tent could be seen, being erected upon a slight eminence. It was like a scene from fairyland. There were rushing cascades, beautiful marble statues, arbors and bowers, in which were birds of every color from every clime. Behind a group of trees was a lofty structure of the purest marble, a shell, borne aloft by gigantic Tritons and mermaids, in which there was room for fifty musicians, who were to fill the air with sweet sounds, and never to become so loud as to weary the ear or disturb conversation.

If the tents, the rushing cascades, the rare flowers, the many-colored birds, were a beautiful sight by daylight, how much more entrancing it would be at night, when illuminated by thousands of brilliant lamps!

The count, having taken a last look at the arrangements and seen that they were perfect, now retired to his rooms, and there, with the aid of his twelve valets, he commenced his toilet. The countess had already been in the hands of her Parisian *coiffeur* for some hours.

The count wore a suit of blue velvet. The price of embroidery in silver and pearls on his coat would have furnished hundreds of wretched, starving families with bread. His diamond shoe-buckles would almost have sufficed to pay the army, which had gone unpaid for months. When his toilet was finished, he entered his study to devote a few moments, at least, to his public duties, and to read those letters which to-day's post had brought him from all parts of the world, and which his secretary was accustomed to place in his study at this hour. He took a letter, broke the seal hastily, and skimming over it quickly, threw it aside and opened another, to read anew the complaints, the prayers, the flatteries, the assurances of love, of his correspondents. But none of them were calculated to compel the minister's attention. He had long ago hardened his heart against prayers and complaints; as for flattery, he well knew that he had to pay for it with pensions, with position, with titles, with orders, etc., etc. But it seemed as if the letters were not all of the usual sort, for the expression of indifference which had rested

upon his countenance while reading the others, had vanished and given place to one of a very different character. This letter was from Flemming, the Saxon ambassador in Berlin, and contained strange, wild rumors. The King of Prussia, it seemed, had left Berlin the day before, with all the princes and his staff officers, and no one knew exactly where he was going! Rumor said, though, that he and his army were marching toward Saxony! After reading this, Count Brühl broke out into a loud laugh.

"Well," said he, "it must be granted that this little poet-king, Frederick, has the art of telling the most delightful fairy-tales to his subjects, and of investing every action of his with the greatest importance. Ah, Margrave of Brandenburg! we will soon be in a condition to take your usurped crown from your head. Parade as much as you like—make the world believe in you and your absurd manœuvres—the day will soon come when she will but see in you a poor knight with naught but his title of marquis." With a triumphant smile he threw down the letter and grasped the next.

"Another from Flemming?" said he. "Why, truly, the good count is becoming fond of writing. Ah," said he, after reading it carelessly, "more warnings! He declares that the King of Prussia intends attacking Saxony—that he is now already at our borders. He then adds, that the king is aware of the contract which we and our friends have signed, swearing to attack Prussia simultaneously. Well, my good Flemming, there is not much wisdom needed to tell me that if the king knows of our contract, he will be all the more on his guard, and will make preparations to defend himself; for he would not be so foolhardy as to attempt to attack our three united armies. No, no. Our regiments can remain quietly in Poland—the seventeen thousand men here will answer all purposes.

"There is but one more of these begging letters," said he, opening it, but throwing it aside without reading it. Out of it fell a folded piece of paper. "Why," said the count, taking it up, "there are verses. Has Flemming's fear of the Prussian king made a poet of him?" He opened it and read aloud:

"'A piece of poetry which a friend, Baron Pöllnitz, gave me yesterday. The author is the King of Prussia.'

"Well," said the count, laughing, "a piece of poetry about me—the king does me great honor. Let us see; perhaps these verses can be read at the table to-day, and cause some amusement. 'Ode to Count Brühl,' with this inscription: '*Il ne faut pas s'inquieter de l'avenir.*' That is a wise philosophical sentence, which nevertheless did not spring from the brain of his Prussian majesty. And now for the verses." And straightening the paper before him, he commenced:

"Esclave malheureux de la haute fortune,
D'un roi trop indolent souverain absolu,
Surchargé de travaux dont le soin l'importune,
Brühl, quitte des grandeurs l'embarras superflu.
Au sein de ton opulence
Je vois le Dieu des ennuis,
Et dans ta magnificence
Le repos fait tes nuits.

"Descend de ce palais dont le superbe faîte
Domine sur la Saxe, s'élèvent aux cieux.
D'où ton esprit craintif conjure la tempête
Que soulève àla cour un peuple d'envieux:
Vois cette grandeur fragile
Et cesse enfin d'admirer
L'éclat pompeux d'une ville
Où tout feint de t'adorer." *

The count's voice had at first been loud, pathetic, and slightly ironical, but it became gradually lower, and sank at last almost to a whisper. A deep, angry red suffused his face, as he read on. Again his voice became louder as he read the last two verses:

"Connaissez la Fortune inconstante et légère;
La perfide se plait aux plus cruels revers,
On la voit abuser le sage, le vulgaire,
Jouer insolemment tout ce faible univers;
Aujourd'hui c'est sur ma tête
Qu'elle répand des faveurs,
Dès demain elle s'apprête
A les emporter ailleurs.

"Fixe-t-elle sur moi sa bizarre inconstance,
Mon cœur lui saura gré du bien qu'elle me fait
Veut-elle en d'autres lieux marquer sa bienveillance,
Je lui remets ses dons sans chagrin, sans regret.
Plein d'une vertu plus forte
J'épouse la pauvreté
Si pour dot elle m'apporte
L'honneur et la probité."

The paper fell from the count's hand and he looked at it thoughtfully. An expression of deep emotion rested upon his countenance, which, in spite of his fifty years, could still be called handsome—as he repeated in a low, trembling voice:

"J'épouse la pauvreté,
Si pour dot elle m'apporte
L'honneur et la probité."

The sun coming through the window rested upon his tall form, causing the many jewels upon his garments to sparkle like stars on

* See note, page 571.

the blue background, enveloping him in a sort of glory. He had repeated for the third time, "*J'épouse la pauvreté,*" when the door leading to his wife's apartments was opened, and the countess entered in the full splendor of her queenly toilet, sparkling with jewels. The count was startled by her entrance, but he now broke out into a loud, mocking laugh.

"Truly, countess," said he, "you could not have found a better moment to interrupt me. For the last half hour my thoughts have been given up to sentiment. Wonderful dreams have been chasing each other through my brain. But you have again shown yourself my good angel, Antonia, by dissipating these painful thoughts." He pressed a fervent kiss upon her hand, then looking at her with a beaming countenance, he said:

"How beautiful you are, Antonia; you must have found that mysterious river which, if bathed in, insures perpetual youth and beauty."

"Ah!" said the countess, smiling, "all know that no one can flatter so exquisitely as Count Brühl."

"But I am not always paid with the same coin, Antonia," said the count, earnestly. "Look at this poem, that the King of Prussia has written of me. Truly, there is no flattery in it."

While reading, the countess's countenance was perfectly clear; not the slightest cloud was to be seen upon her brow.

"Do you not think it a good poem?" said she, indifferently.

"Well," said he, "I must acknowledge that there was a certain fire in it that touched my heart."

"I find it stupid," said she, sternly. "There is but one thing in it that pleases me, and that is the title—'*Il ne faut pas s'inquieter de l'avenir.*' The little King of Prussia has done well to choose this for his motto, for without it, it strikes me, his peace would be forever gone, for his future will surely be a humiliating one."

The count laughed.

"How true that is!" said he; "and a just answer to his stupid poem. Speak of something else."

He tore the paper into small pieces, which, with a graceful bow, he laid at the feet of the countess.

"A small sacrifice," said he, "which I bring to my goddess. Tread upon it, and destroy the king's words with your fairy foot."

The countess obeyed him, laughingly.

"But now, count," said she, "we will, for a moment, speak of graver things. I have received letters from London—from our son. Poor Henry is in despair, and he has requested me to intercede for him. You were always very stern with him, my friend, therefore he fears your anger, now that he has been a little imprudent."

"Well, what is it?" said the count; "I hope it is no duel, for that would make me extremely angry."

"It is nothing of that kind. His imprudence is of another sort. He is in want of money."

"Money!" said the count, in amazement; "why, barely a month ago, I sent him six hundred thousand thalers. That, and what he took with him, three months ago, is quite a large sum, for it amounts to more than a million of thalers."

"But, my dear husband, in England every thing is so dear! and there, to move amongst and impress those rich lords, he must really have more. It seems that our Charles Joseph has fallen in love with a lady whom all London worships for her surpassing beauty. But she, having a cold heart, will listen to no one. She laughs at those who flatter her, and will receive no presents. She seemed an invincible fortress, but our son, thanks to stratagem, has taken it."

"I am curious to know how," said the count, laughing.

"He played a game of *écarté* with her. He played for notes to the amount of ten pounds, and, at first, Charles won, much to the displeasure of the proud lady, who did not relish being beaten, even in a game of cards. Charles, perceiving this, played badly. The lady won from him eighty thousand pounds."

"Eighty thousand pounds," cried the count, "why, that is a half a million of thalers!"

"And do you mean to say," said the countess, angrily, "that that is too much to gain the favor of a beautiful lady?"

"No! it is not too much; but it is certainly enough. I hope, at least, it was not in vain."

"No, no! and London is now raving about the intellectual, genial and generous son of Count Brühl. I trust, count, that you instantly sent him a check."

"Yes," said the count, shrugging his shoulders. "But, countess, if the king were to hear this story, it would cause much evil; for you know that he believes in economy; luckily for me, he believes me to be an economical man. Those enemies who would not dare to accuse us, would have no fears of saying evil of our son; he will certainly hear this eighty-thousand-pound story."

"We will tell him ourselves, but say that the story is much exaggerated."

"What a wonderful woman you are, Antonia!" said her husband; "your counsel is wise; we will follow it."

At this moment a slight knocking was heard at the door, and the sceretary entered with a sealed letter.

"A courier from Torgau just arrived with this from the commandant."

The count's brow became clouded.

"Business! forever business!" said he. "How dared you annoy me with this, upon the birthday of my wife?"

"Pardon, your excellency; but the courier brought with this packet such strange news, that I ventured to disturb you, to communicate—"

The beating of drums and the thunder of cannon interrupted him.

"The king and queen are now entering their carriage," cried the count. "No more business to-day, my friend. It will keep till to-morrow. Come, Antonia, we must welcome their majesties." And taking his wife's hand, he passed out of the study.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INTERRUPTED FEAST.

As the Count Brühl and his wife entered the saloon, it almost seemed as if they were the royal couple for whom all this company was waiting. Every one of any rank or position in Dresden was present. There were to be seen the gold and silver embroidered uniforms of generals and ambassadors; jewelled stars were sparkling upon many breasts; the proudest, loveliest women of the court, bearing the noblest Saxon names, were there, accompanied by princes, counts, dukes, and barons, and one and all were bowing reverentially to the count and his wife. And now, at a sign from the grand chamberlain, the pages of the countess, clothed in garments embroidered with silver and pearls, approached to carry her train; beside them were the count's officers, followed by all the noble guests. Thus they passed through the third room, where the servants of the house, numbering upward of two hundred, were placed in military order, and then on until they came to the grand entrance, which had been turned into a floral temple.

The royal equipage was at the gate; the host and hostess advanced to welcome the king and queen, whose arrival had been announced by the roar of cannon.

The king passed through the beautiful avenue, and greeted the company placed on either side of him, gayly. The queen, sparkling with diamonds, forcing herself also to smile, was at his side; and as their majesties passed on, saying here and there a kind, merry word, it seemed as if the sun had just risen over all these noble, rich, and powerful guests. This was reflected upon every countenance.

The gods had demanded from Olympus to favor these mortals with their presence, and to enjoy themselves among them. And truly, even a king might spend some happy hours in this delightful garden.

The air was so soft and mild, so sweet from the odor of many flowers; the rustling of the trees was accompanied by soft whispers of music that seemed floating like angels' wings upon the air. Every countenance was sparkling with happiness and content, and the king could but take the flattering unction to his soul that all his subjects were equally as happy as the *élite* by which he was surrounded.

Pleased with this thought and delighted with all the arrangements for the *fête*, the king gave himself up to an enjoyment which, though somewhat clouding his character as a deity, was immensely gratifying to him.

He abandoned himself to the delights of the table! He devoured with a sort of amiable astonishment the rare and choice dishes which, even to his experienced and pampered palate, appeared unfathomable mysteries; luxuries had been procured, not only from London and Paris, but from every part of the world. He delighted himself with the gold and purple wines, whose vintage was unknown to him, and whose odor intoxicated him more than the perfume of flowers. He requested the count to give the name and history of all these wines.

The count obeyed in that shy, reverential manner in which he was accustomed to speak. He charmed him by relating the many difficulties he had overcome to obtain this wine from the Cape of Good Hope, which had to cross the line twice to arrive at its highest perfection. He said that for two years he had been thinking of this gloriously happy day, and had had a ship upon the sea for the purpose of perfecting this wine. He bade the king notice the strangely formed fish, which could only be obtained from the Chinese sea. Then, following up the subject, he spoke of the peculiar and laughable customs and habits of the Chinese, thus causing even the proud queen to laugh at his humorous descriptions.

Count Brühl was suddenly interrupted in an unusual manner.

His secretary, Willmar, approached the royal table, and without a word of excuse, without greeting the king, handed the count a sealed package!

This was such a crime against courtly etiquette that the count, from sheer amazement, made no excuses to the king; he only cast a threatening look at the secretary. But as he encountered Willmar's pale, terrified countenance, a tremor seized him, and he cast an eager glance upon the papers in his hand, which, no doubt, contained the key to all this mystery.

"They are from the commandant at Leipsic," whispered the secretary; "I entreat your excellency to read them."

Before the count had time, however, to open the dispatch, a still stranger event took place.

The Prussian ambassador, who, upon the plea of illness, had declined Count Brühl's invitation, suddenly appeared in the garden, accompanied by the four secretaries of his legation, and approached the royal table. Upon his countenance there was no sign of sickness, but rather an expression of great joy.

As he neared the tent, the gay song and merry jest ceased. Every eye was fixed inquiringly upon the individual who had dared to disturb this *fête* by his presence. The music, which had before filled the air with joyous sounds, was now playing a heart-breaking air.

Count Brühl now arose and advanced. He greeted the Pussian amabssador in a few cold, ceremonious words.

But Count Mattzahn's only answer to this greeting was a silent bow. He then said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the king and queen:

"Count Brühl, as ambassador of the King of Prussia, I request you to demand an audience for me at once from the King of Saxony. I have an important dispatch from my king."

Count Brühl, struck with terror, could only gaze at him, he had not the strength to answer.

But King Augustus, rising from his seat, said:

"The ambassador of my royal brother can approach; I consent to grant him this audience; it is demanded in so strange a manner, it must surely have some important object."

The count entered the royal tent.

"Is it your majesty's wish," said Mattzahn, solemnly, "that all these noble guests shall be witnesses? I am commanded by my royal master to demand a private audience."

"Draw the curtain!" said the king.

Count Brühl, with trembling fingers, drew the golden cord, and the heavy curtains fell to the ground. They were now completely separated from the guests.

"And now, count," said the king, taking his seat by his proud, silent queen, "speak."

Bowing profoundly, Count Mattzahn drew a dispatch from his pocket, and read in a loud, earnest voice.

It was a manifesto from the King of Prussia, written by himself and addressed to all the European courts. In it, Frederick denied being actuated by any desire of conquest or gain, but declared that he was compelled to commence this war to which Austria had provoked him by her many and prolonged insults.

There was a pause when the count finished reading. Upon the gentle, amiable countenance of the king there was now an angry look. The queen was indifferent, cold, and haughty; she seemed to have paid no attention whatever to Count Mattzahn, but, turning to the princess at her side, she asked a perfectly irrelevant question, which was answered in a whisper.

Countess Brühl dared not raise her eyes; she did not wish her faithless lover, Count Mattzahn, whose cunning political intrigues she now perfectly understood, to see her pain and confusion. The prince-elector, well aware of the importance of this hour, stood at the king's side; behind him was Count Brühl, whose handsome, sparkling countenance was now deadly pale.

Opposite to this agitated group, stood the Prussian ambassador, whose haughty, quiet appearance presented a marked contrast. His clear, piercing glance rested upon each one of them, and seemed to fathom every thought of their souls. His tall, imposing form was raised proudly, and there was an expression of the noblest satisfaction upon his countenance. After waiting some time in vain for an answer, he placed the manifesto before the king.

"With your majesty's permission, I will now add a few words," said he.

"Speak!" said the king, laconically.

"His majesty, my royal master," continued Count Mattzahn, in a loud voice, "has commissioned me to give your majesty the most quieting assurances, and to convince you that his march through Saxony has no purpose inimical to you, but that he only uses it as a passway to Bohemia."

The king's countenance now became dark and stern, even the queen lost some of her haughty indifference.

"How?" said the king; "Frederick of Prussia does us the honor to pass through our land without permission? He intends coming to Saxony?"

"Sire," said Mattzahn, with a slight smile, "his majesty is already there! Yesterday his army, divided into three columns, passed the Saxon borders!"

The king rose hastily from his seat. The queen was deadly pale, her lips trembled, but she remained silent, and cast a look of bitter hatred upon the ambassador of her enemy.

Count Brühl was leaning against his chair, trembling with terror, when the king turned to him.

"I ask my prime minister if he knows how far the King of Prussia has advanced into Saxony?"

"Sire, I was in perfect ignorance of this unheard-of event. The King of Prussia wishes to surprise us in a manner worthy of the

most skilful magician. Perhaps it is one of those April jests which Frederick II. is so fond of practising."

"Your excellency can judge for yourself," said Count Mattzahn, earnestly, "whether the taking of towns and fortresses is to be considered a jest. For, if I am rightly informed, you have this day received two dispatches, informing you of my royal master's line of march."

"How?" said the king, hastily; "you were aware of this, count, and I was not informed? You received important dispatches, and I was not notified of it?"

"It is true," said the count, much embarrassed. "I received two couriers. The dispatches of the first were handed to me the same moment your majesties entered my house; I received the other just as Count Mattzahn arrived. I have, therefore, read neither."

"With your majesty's permission," said Count Mattzahn, "I will inform you of their contents."

"You will be doing me a great service," said the king, earnestly.

"The first dispatch, sire, contained the news that his majesty the King of Prussia had taken without resistance the fortresses of Torgau and Wittenberg!"

A hollow groan escaped the king as he sank in his chair. The queen became paler than before.

"What more?" said the king, gloomily.

"The second dispatch," continued Count Mattzahn, smilingly, "informed his excellency Count Brühl that the King of Prussia, my noble and victorious master, was pressing forward, and had also taken Leipsic without the slightest resistance!"

"How!" said the king, "he is in Leipsic?"

"Sire, I think he *was* there," said Count Mattzahn, laughing; "for it seems that the Prussians, led by their king, have taken the wings of the morning. Frederick was in Leipsic when the courier left—he must now be on his way to Dresden. But he has commissioned me to say that his motive for passing through Saxony is to see and request your majesty to take a neutral part in this war between Austria and Prussia."

"A neutral part!" said the king, angrily, "when my land is invaded without question or permission, and peace broken in this inexplicable manner. Have you any other message, count?"

"I have finished, sire, and humbly ask if you have any answer for my sovereign?"

"Tell the king, your master, that I will raise my voice throughout the land of Germany to complain of this unheard-of and arbitrary infringement of the peace. At the throne of the German emperor I will demand by what right the King of Prussia dares to

enter Saxony with his army and take possession of my cities. You can depart, sir; I have no further answer for his majesty!"

The count, bowing reverentially to the king and queen, left the royal tent.

Every eye was fixed upon the prime minister. From him alone, who was considered the soul of the kingdom of Saxony, help and counsel was expected. All important questions were referred to him, and all were now eagerly looking for his decision. But the powerful favorite was in despair. He knew how utterly impossible it was to withstand the King of Prussia's army. Every arrangement for this war had been made on paper, but in reality little had been accomplished. The army was not in readiness! The prime minister had been in want of a few luxuries of late, and had, therefore, as he believed there would be no war until the following spring, reduced it. He knew how little Saxony was prepared to battle against the King of Prussia's disciplined troops, and the ambassador's friendly assurances did not deceive him.

"Well, count," said the king, after a long pause, "how is this strange request of Frederick II., that we should remain neutral, to be answered?"

Before the count was able to answer, the queen said, in a loud voice:

"By a declaration of war, my husband! This is due to your honor. We have been insulted; it therefore becomes you to throw down the gauntlet to your presumptuous adversary."

"We will continue this conversation in my apartments," said the king, rising; "this is no place for it. Our beautiful feast has been disturbed in a most brutal manner. Count Brühl, notify the different ambassadors that, in an hour, I will receive them at my palace."

"This hour is mine!" thought the queen, as she arose; "in it I will stimulate my husband's soft and gentle heart to a brave, warlike decision; he will yield to my prayers and tears." She took the king's arm with a gay smile, and left the tent, followed by the princes, and the host and hostess.

Silently they passed the festive tables, from which the guests had risen to greet them. The courtiers sought to read in their countenances the solution of that riddle which had occupied them since the arrival of the Prussian ambassador, and about which they had been anxiously debating.

But, upon the queen's countenance there was now her general look of indifference. It is true, the king was not smiling as was his wont when amongst his subjects, but his pleasant countenance betrayed no fear or sorrow. The queen maintained her exalted bearing; nothing had passed to bow her proud head.

After the royal guests had left, Count Brühl returned. He also had regained his usual serenity. With ingenious friendliness he turned to his guests, and while requesting them, in a flattering manner, to continue to grace his wife's *fête* by their presence, demanded for himself leave of absence. Then passing on, he whispered here and there a few words to the different ambassadors. They and the count then disappeared.

The *fête* continued quietly; the music recommenced its gay, melodious sounds, the birds carolled their songs, and the flowers were as beautiful and as sweet as before. The jewels of the courtiers sparkled as brilliantly. Their eyes alone were not so bright, and the happy smile had left their lips. They were all weighed down by a presentiment that danger was hovering around them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARCHIVES AT DRESDEN.

Count Mattzahn's prophecy came true. The King of Prussia came to Dresden, and there, as in every other part of Saxony, found no resistance. Fear and terror had gone before him, disarming all opposition. The king and prince-elector were not accustomed to have a will of their own; and Count Brühl, the favorite of fortune, showed himself weak and helpless in the hour of adversity. It needed the queen's powerful energy, and the forcible representations of the French ambassador, Count Broglio, to arouse them from their lethargy; and what Count Broglio's representations, and the queen's prayers and tears commenced, hatred finished. Count Brühl's sinking courage rose at the thought of the possibility of still undermining the King of Prussia, and putting an end to his victorious march. It was only necessary to detain him, to prevent him from reaching the Bohemian borders, until the Austrian army came to their assistance, until the French troops had entered and taken possession of Prussia. Therefore, Count Brühl sent courier after courier to Saxony's allies, to spread her cry for help to every friendly court. He then collected the army, ordered them to camp at Pirna, which was very near the boundary of Bohemia, and, as it was guarded on one side by the Elbe, and on the other by high rocks, appeared perfectly secure. When these preparations were commenced, the count's courage rose considerably, and he determined to prove himself a hero, and to give the Saxon army the inspiring consciousness that, in the hour of danger, their king would be in their midst.

The king therefore left for the fortress of Königstein, accompanied by Count Brühl, leaving the army, consisting of about seventeen thousand men, to follow under the command of General Rutrosky, and to encamp at the foot of Königstein. Arrived at Königstein, where they thought themselves perfectly secure, they gave themselves up to the free and careless life of former days. They had only changed their residence, not their character; their dreams were of future victories, of the many provinces they would take from the King of Prussia; and with this delightful prospect the old gay, luxurious, and wanton life was continued. What difference did it make to Count Brühl that the army was only provided with commissary stores for fourteen days, and that this time was almost past, and no way had been found to furnish them with additional supplies. The King of Prussia had garrisoned every outlet, and only the King of Saxony's forage-wagon was allowed to pass.

Frederick knew better than the Saxon generals the fearful, invincible enemy that was marching to the camp of Pirna. What were the barricades, the palisades, and ambushes, by which the camp was surrounded, to this enemy? This foe was in the camp, not outside of it—he had no need to climb the barricades—he came hither flying through the air, breathing, like a gloomy bird of death, his horrible cries of woe. This enemy was hunger—enervating, discouraging, demoralizing hunger!

The fourteen days had expired, and in the camp of Pirna languished seventeen thousand men! The bread rations became smaller and smaller; but the third part of the usual meat ration was given; the horses' food also was considerably shortened. Sorrow and starvation reigned in the camp. Why should this distress Count Brühl? He lived in his usual luxurious splendor, with the king. Looking out from his handsome apartments upon the valley lying at his feet, he saw on a little meadow by which the Elbe was flowing, herds of cows and calves, sheep and beeves, which were there to die, like the Saxon soldiers, for their king. These herds were for the royal table; there was, therefore, no danger that the enemy visiting the army should find its way to the fortress. It was also forbidden, upon pain of death, to force one of these animals intended for the royal table, from their noble calling, and to satisfy therewith the hungry soldiers. Count Brühl could therefore wait patiently the arrival of the Austrian army, which was already in motion, under the command of General Brown.

While the King of Poland was living gay and joyous in the fortress of Königstein, the queen with the princes of the royal house had remained in Dresden; and though she knew her husband's irresolute character, and knew that the King of Prussia, counting

upon this, was corresponding with him, endeavoring to persuade him to neutrality, still she had no fears of her husband succumbing to his entreaties. For was not Count Brühl, the bitter, irreconcilable enemy of Prussia, at his side?—and had not the king said to her, in a solemn manner, before leaving: "Better that every misfortune come upon us than to take the part of our enemies!" The queen, therefore, felt perfectly safe upon this point. She remained in Dresden for two reasons: first, to watch the King of Prussia, and then to guard the archives—those archives which contained the most precious treasures of Saxon diplomacy—the most important secrets of their allies. These papers were prized more highly by the queen than all the crown jewels now lying in their silver casket; and though the keeping of the latter was given over to some one else, no one seemed brave enough to shield the former. No one but herself should guard these rich treasures. The state archives were placed in those rooms of the palace which had but one outlet, and that leading into one of the queen's apartments. In this room she remained—she took her meals, worked, and slept there—there she received the princes and the foreign ambassadors—always guarding the secret door, of which she carried the key fastened to a gold chain around her neck. But still the queen was continually in fear her treasure would be torn from her, and the King of Prussia's seeming friendliness was not calculated to drive away this anxiety. It is true the king had sent her his compliments by Marshal Keith, with the most friendly assurances of his affection, but notwithstanding this, the chancery, the colleges, and the mint department had been closed; all the artillery and ammunition had been taken from the Dresden arsenal and carried to Magdeburg; some of the oldest and worthiest officers of the crown had been dismissed; and the Swiss guard, intended for service in the palace, had been disarmed. All this agreed but badly with the king's quieting assurances, and was calculated to increase the hatred of his proud enemy. She had, nevertheless, stifled her anger so far as to invite the King of Prussia, who was staying in the palace of the Countess Morizinska, not far from his army, to her table.

Frederick had declined this invitation. He remained quietly in the palace, whose doors were open to all, giving audience to all who desired it, listening to their prayers, and granting their wishes.

The Queen of Poland heard this with bitter anger; and the more gracious the King of Prussia showed himself to the Saxons, the more furious and enraged became the heart of this princess.

"He will turn our people from their true ruler," said she to Countess Ogliva, her first maid of honor, who was sitting at her side upon a divan placed before the princess's door. "This hypo-

critical affability will only serve to gain the favor of our subjects, and turn them from their duty."

"It has succeeded pretty well," said the countess, sighing. "The Saxon nobility are continually in the antechamber of this heretical king; and yesterday several of the city authorities, accompanied by the foreign ambassadors, waited upon him, and he received them."

"Yes, he receives every one; he gives gay balls every evening, at which he laughs and jokes merrily. He keeps open house, and the poor people assemble there in crowds to see him eat." Maria Josephine sighed deeply. "I hate this miserable, changeable people!" murmured she.

"And your majesty does well," said the countess, whose wrinkled, yellow countenance was now illuminated by a strange fire. "The anger of God will rest upon this heretical nation that has turned from her salvation, and left the holy mother church in haughty defiance. The King of Poland cannot even appoint true Catholic-Christians as his officers—every position of any importance is occupied by heretics. But the deluge will surely come again upon this sinful people and destroy them."

The queen crossed herself, and prayed in a low voice.

The countess continued: "This Frederick stimulates these heretical Saxons in their wicked unbelief. He, who it is well known, laughs and mocks at every religion, even his own—attended, yesterday, the Protestant church, to show our people that he is a protector of that church."

"Woe, woe to him!" said the queen.

"With listening ear he attended to his so-called preacher's sermon, and then loudly expressed his approval of it, well knowing that this preacher is a favorite of heretics in Dresden. This cunning king wished to give them another proof of his favor. Does your majesty wish to know of the present he made this preacher?"

"What?" said the queen, with a mocking laugh. "Perhaps a Bible, with the marginal observations of his profligate friends, Voltaire and La Mettrie?"

"No, your majesty; the king sent this learned preacher a dozen bottles of champagne!"

"He is a blasphemous scoffer, even with that which he declares holy. But punishment will overtake him. Already the voice of my exalted nephew, the Emperor of Germany, is to be heard throughout the entire land, commanding the King of Prussia to return at once to his own kingdom, and to make apologies to the King of Poland for his late insults. It is possible that, in his haughty pride, Frederick will take no notice of this command. But it will be otherwise with the generals and commandants of this usurper.

They have been commanded by the emperor to leave their impious master, and not to be the sharers of his frightful crime."

"I fear," said Countess Ogliva, sighing, and raising her eyes heavenward—"I fear they will not listen to the voice of our good emperor."

"But they will hear the voice of his cannon," cried the queen, impetuously; "the thunder of our artillery and the anger of God will annihilate them, and they will fall to the ground as if struck by lightning before the swords blessed by our holy priests."

The door of the antechamber was at this moment opened violently, and the queen's chamberlain appeared upon its threshold.

"Your majesty, a messenger from the King of Prussia requests an audience," said he.

The queen's brow became clouded, and she blushed with anger.

"Tell this messenger that I am not in a condition to receive his visit, and that he must therefore impart to you his message."

"It is, no doubt, another of his hypocritical, friendly assurances," said the queen, as the chamberlain left. "He has, no doubt, some evil design, and wishes to soothe us before he strikes."

The chamberlain returned, but his countenance was now white with terror.

"Well!" said the queen, "what is this message?"

"Ah, your majesty," stammered the trembling courtier, "my lips would not dare to repeat it; and I could never find the courage to tell you what he demands."

"What he demands!" repeated the queen; "has it come to that, that a foreign prince commands in our land? Go, countess, and in my name, fully empowered by me, receive this King of Prussia's message; then return, and dare not keep the truth from me."

Countess Ogliva and the chamberlain left the royal apartment, and Maria Josephine was alone. And now, there was no necessity of guarding this mask of proud quietude and security. Alone, with her own heart, the queen's woman nature conquered. She did not now force back the tears which streamed from her eyes, nor did she repress the sighs that oppressed her heart. She wept, and groaned, and trembled. But hearing a step in the antechamber, she dried her eyes, and again put on the proud mask of her royalty. It was the countess returning. Slowly and silently she passed through the apartment. Upon her colorless countenance there was a dark, angry expression, and a scoffing smile played about her thin, pale lips.

"The King of Prussia," said she, in a low, whispering voice, as she reached the queen, "demands that the key to the state archives be delivered at once to his messenger, Major von Vangenheim."

The queen raised herself proudly from her seat.

"Say to this Major von Vangenheim that he will never receive this key!" said she, commandingly.

The countess bowed, and left the room.

"He has left," said she, when she returned to the queen; "though he said that he or another would return."

"Let us now consult as to what is to be done," said the queen. "Send for Father Guarini, so that we may receive his advice."

Thanks to the queen's consultation with her confessor and her maid of honor, the King of Prussia's messenger, when he returned, was not denied an audience. This time, it was not Major von Vangenheim, but General von Wylich, the Prussian commandant at Dresden, whom Frederick sent.

Maria Josephine received him in the room next to the archives, sitting upon a divan, near to the momentous door. She listened with a careless indifference, as he again demanded, in the king's name, the key to the state archives.

The queen turned to her maid of honor.

"How is it that you are so negligent, countess?" said she; "did I not tell you to answer to the messenger of the king, that I would give this key, which is the property of the Prince-Elector of Saxony, and which he intrusted to me, to no one but my husband?"

"I had the honor to fulfil your majesty's command," said the countess, respectfully.

"How is it, then," said she, turning to General von Wylich, "that you dare to come again with this request, which I have already answered?"

"Oh, may your majesty graciously pardon me," cried the general, deeply moved; "but his majesty, my king and master, has given me the sternest commands to get the key, and bring him the papers. I am therefore under the sad necessity to beseech your majesty to agree to my master's will."

"Never!" said the queen, proudly. "That door shall never be opened; you shall never enter it."

"Be merciful. I dare not leave here without fulfilling my master's commands. Have pity on my despair, your majesty, and give me the key to that door."

"Listen! I shall not give you the key," said the queen, white and trembling with anger; "and if you open the door by force, I will cover it with my body; and now, sir, if you wish to murder the Queen of Poland, open the door." And raising her proud, imposing form, the queen placed herself before the door.

"Mercy! mercy! queen," cried the general; "do not force me to do something terrible; do not make me guilty of a crime against your sacred royalty. I dare not return to my king without these

papers. I therefore implore your majesty humbly, upon my knees, to deliver this key to me."

He fell upon his knees before the queen, humbly supplicating her to repent her decision.

"I will not give it to you," said she, with a triumphant smile. "I do not move from this door; it shall not be opened."

General Wylich rose from his lowly position. He was pale, but there was a resolute expression upon his countenance. Looking upon it, you could not but see that he was about to do something extremely painful to his feelings.

"Queen of Poland," said he, in a loud, firm voice, "I am commanded by my king to bring to him the state archives. Below, at the castle gate, wagons are in attendance to receive them; they are accompanied by a detachment of Prussian soldiers. I have only to open that window, sign to them, and they are here. In the antechamber are the four officers who came with me; by opening the door, they will be at my side."

"What do you mean by this?" said the queen, in a faltering voice, moving slightly from the door.

"I mean, that at any price, I must enter that room. If the key is not given to me, I will call upon my soldiers to break down the door; as they have learned to tear down the walls of a fortress, it will be an easy task; that if the Queen of Poland does not value her high position sufficiently to guard herself against any attack, I will be compelled to lay hands upon a royal princess, and lead her by force from that door, which my soldiers must open! But, once more, I bend my knee, and implore your majesty to preserve me from this crime, and to have mercy on me."

And again he fell upon his knees supplicating for pity.

"Be merciful! be merciful!" cried the queen's confessor and the Countess Ogliva, who both knew that General Wylich would do all that he had said, and had both fallen on their knees, adding their entreaties to his. "Your majesty has done all that human power can do. It is now time to guard your holy form from insult. Have mercy on your threatened royalty."

"No, no!" murmured the queen, "I cannot! I cannot! Death would be sweet in comparison to this humiliating defeat."

The queen's confessor, Father Guarini, now rose from his knees, and, approaching the queen, he said, in a solemn, commanding voice:

"My daughter, by virtue of my profession, as a servant of the holy mother church, to whom is due obedience and trust, I command you to deliver up to this man the key of this door."

The queen's head fell upon her breast, and hollow, convulsive

groans escaped her. Then, with a hasty movement, she severed the key from her chain.

"I obey you, my father," said she. "There is the key, general; this room can now be entered."

General Wylich took the key, kissing reverentially the hand that gave it to him. He then said to her, in a voice full of emotion:

"I have but this last favor to ask of your majesty, that you will now leave this room, so that my soldiers may enter it."

Without answering, the queen, accompanied by her confessor and maid of honor, left the apartment.

"And now," said the queen to Countess Ogliva, as she entered her reception-room, "send messengers at once to all the foreign ambassadors, and tell them I command their presence."

CHAPTER XIV.

SAXONY HUMILIATED.

A HALF an hour later the ambassadors of France, Austria, Holland, Russia, and Sweden, were assembeled in the queen's reception-room. The queen was there, pale, and trembling with anger. With the proud pathos of misfortune, and humiliated royalty, she apprised them of the repeated insults she had endured, and commanded them to write at once to their different courts, imploring their rulers to send aid to her sorely threatened kingdom.

"And if these princes," said she, impetuously, help us to battle against this usurper, in defending us they will be defending their own rights and honor. For my cause is now the cause of all kings; for if my crown falls, the foundation of their thrones will also give way. For this little Margrave of Brandenburg, who calls himself King of Prussia, will annihilate us all if we do not ruin him in advance. I, for my part, swear him a perpetual resistance, a perpetual enmity! I will perish willingly in this fight if only my insults are revenged and my honor remains untarnished. Hasten, therefore, to acquaint your courts with all that has occurred here."

"I will be the first to obey your majesty," said the French ambassador, Count Broglio, approaching the queen. "I will repeat your words to my exalted master; I will portray to your majesty's lovely daughter, the Dauphine of France, the sufferings her royal mother has endured, and I know she will strain every nerve to send you aid. With your gracious permission, I will now take my leave, for to-day I start for Paris."

"To Paris!" cried the queen; "would you leave my court in the hour of misfortune?"

"I would be the last to do this, unless forced by necessity," said the count; "but the King of Prussia has just dismissed me, and sent me my passport!"

"Your passport! dismissed you!" repeated the queen. "Have I heard aright? Do you speak of the King of Prussia? Has he then made himself King of Saxony?"

Before any one had time to answer the queen's painful questions, the door was opened, and the king's ministers entered; beside them was to be seen the pale, terrified countenance of Count Leuke, the king's chamberlain.

Slowly and silently these gentlemen passed through the room and approached the queen.

"We have come," said Count Hoymb, bowing lowly, "to take leave of your majesty."

The queen fell slightly back, and gazed in terror at the four ministers standing before her with bowed heads.

"Has the king, my husband, sent for you? Are you come to take leave of me before starting to Königstein?"

"No, your majesty; we come because we have been dismissed from our offices by the King of Prussia."

The queen did not answer, but gazed wildly at the sad countenances about her; and now she fixed a searching glance upon the royal chamberlain.

"Well, and you?" said she. "Have you a message for me from my husband? Are you from Königstein?"

"Yes, your majesty, I come from Königstein. But I am not a bearer of pleasant news. I am sent to Dresden by the King of Poland to request of the King of Prussia passports for himself and Count Brühl. The king wishes to visit Warsaw, and is therefore desirous of obtaining these passports."

"Ah!" said the queen, sighing, "to think that my husband requires permission to travel in his own kingdom, and that he must receive it from our enemy! Well, have you obeyed the king's command, Count Leuke? Have you been to the King of Prussia and received the passports?"

"I was with the King of Prussia," said the count, in a faltering voice.

"Well, what more?"

"He refused me! He does not give his consent to this visit."

"Listen, listen!" said the queen, wildly; "hear the fresh insult thrown at our crown! Can God hear this and not send His lightning to destroy this heretical tyrant? Ah, I will raise my voice; it

shall be a cry of woe and lamentation, and shall resound throughout all Europe; it shall reach every throne, and every one shall hear my voice calling out: 'Woe! woe! woe to us all; our thrones are tottering, they will surely fall if we do not ruin this evil-doer who threatens us all!' "

With a fearful groan, the queen fell fainting into the arms of Countess Ogliva. But the sorrows and humiliations of this day were not the only ones experienced by Maria Josephine from her victorious enemy.

It is true her cry for help resounded throughout Europe. Preparations for war were made in many places, but her allies were not able to prevent the fearful blow that was to be the ruin of Saxony. Though the Dauphine of France, daughter of the wretched Maria Josephine, and the mother of the unfortunate King of France, Louis XVI., threw herself at the feet of Louis XV., imploring for help for her mother's tottering kingdom, the French troops came too late to prevent this disaster. Even though Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria, and niece to the Queen of Saxony, as her army were in want of horses, gave up all her own to carry the cannon. The Austrian cannon was of as little help to Saxony as the French troops.

Starvation was a more powerful ally to Prussia than Austria, France, Russia, and Sweden were to Saxony, for in the Saxon camp also a cry of woe resounded.

It was hunger that compelled the brave Saxon General Rutrosky to capitulate. It was the same cause that forced the King of Saxony to bind himself to the fearful stipulations which the victorious King of Prussia, after having tried in vain for many years to gain an ally in Saxony, made.

In the valley of Lilienstein the first of that great drama, whose scenes are engraved in blood in the book of history, was performed, and for whose further developments many sad, long years were necessary.

In the valley of Lilienstein the Saxon army, compelled to it by actual starvation, gave up their arms; and as these true, brave soldiers, weeping over their humiliation, with one hand laid down their weapons, the other was extended toward their enemies for bread.

Lamentation and despair reigned in the camp at Lilienstein, and there, at a window of the catstle of Königstein, stood the Prince-Elector of Saxony, with his favorite Count Brühl, witnesses to their misery.

After these fearful humiliations, by which Frederick punished the Saxons for their many intrigues, by which he revenged himself for their obstinate enmity, their proud superiority—after these

humiliations, after their complete defeat, the King of Prussia was no longer opposed to the King of Saxony's journey. He sent him the desired passports; he even extended their number, and not only sent one to the king and to Count Brühl, but also to the Countess Brühl, with the express command to accompany her husband. He also sent a pass to Countess Ogliva, compelling this bigoted woman to leave her mistress.

And when the queen again raised her cry of woe, to call her allies to her aid, the King of Prussia answered her with the victorious thunder of the battle of Losovitz, the first battle fought in this war, and in which the Prussians, led by their king, performed wonders of bravery, and defeated for the third time the tremendous Austrian army, under the command of General Brown.

"Never," says Frederick, "since I have had the honor to command the Prussian troops, have they performed such deeds of daring as to-day."

The Austrians, in viewing these deeds, cried out:

"We have found again the old Prussians!"

And still they fought so bravely, that the Prussians remarked in amazement:

"These cannot be the same Austrians!"

This was the first act of that great drama enacted by the European nations, and of which King Frederick II. was the hero.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAIDEN OF BRUNEN.

THE sun was just setting, throwing its crimson glow upon the waters of the Rhine, which appeared to flow like a river of blood between the green meadows on either side of it.

From the little village of Brünen, whose red chimneys were visible above a group of oak and beech trees, the sound of the evening bell was heard, reminding the pious peasants, engaged in cutting and garnering their golden corn, of the hour for devotion.

With the sweet sounds of the bell mingled the joyous mountain *yodel* of the cowherd, who had just descended the little hill yonder, with his herd straying here and there, in picturesque confusion. Upon the green meadow in the foreground, the flocks of the village were pasturing, strictly guarded by a large white dog, whose stern, martial glance not the slightest movement among his army contrary to discipline, escaped. As soon as one of the sheep committed to his care left the fold and approached the field where the reapers were mowing the corn, which was bound at once in sheaves by busy maidens, the stern Phylax barking, growling, and snarling, rushed after the audacious wanderer who sought to appease the anger of his inexorable overseer by a speedy return.

The old shepherd, sitting not far off upon a little wooden stool, with his long, silver hair falling about him, was engaged in weaving a graceful basket of some meadow roots; at every bark of his Phylax he looked up and smiled his approval at his faithful steward; occasionally he gazed across the meadow at the reapers and busy maidens, then there came upon his venerable old countenance an expression of great interest. And well he might be pleased with what he saw there; for that tall, sturdy youth, standing in the wagon, waiting with outstretched arms to catch the sheaves which are skilfully thrown him · that youth with the bright rosy face the sparkling eye, the full red lip, upon which there is always a merry smile, the ivory white teeth—that youth is his beloved son, Charles

Henry. And yonder maiden, not far from the wagon, binding up the corn, in whose tall, proud form, in spite of her plain peasant-gown, there is something imposing; that maiden with the youthful, blooming, lovely face, is his son's betrothed; whom all in the village called the beautiful Anna Sophia, and for whose love Charles Henry was envied by all the village boys. It is true she was a penniless orphan, but in her busy, industrious hands there was a better and surer treasure than in a purse of gold, and her ability and goodness would be a much better dowry to her husband; for Anna Sophia Detzloff could do almost every thing, and the villagers knew not whether to respect her more for her great knowledge, or love her more for her kind, good heart. Anna could read and write like a school-teacher. She wrote every letter which the women of the village sent to their sons and husbands, now far away with the King of Prussia's army, and read to them the answers; and in so beautiful and winning a manner did she read them, that to the happy women it almost seemed as if they were hearing the voices of their loved ones. But, notwithstanding her learning, she was well versed in every sort of work that beseemed a woman. None in the village could prepare more delightful dishes than she; no one could equal her beautiful, rapid sewing and knitting. Anna Sophia learned all these things from her mother, who had lived and worked for many long years in Brünen. Her father had been the village school-teacher, and it was owing to his diligence and activity that the women could now receive letters from their sons and husbands. He had taught the boys to read and write; and though the girls did not learn, the example of his daughter showed that it was not owing to inability, but for a want of time and desire. From her mother, Anna had learned all her womanly duties. She had taught her to be amiable, ready with help for all, kind and sympathetic, and to strive by her good deeds to gain the love of her fellow-creatures.

A joyous family had lived in the little village school-house; though they had poverty and want to fight against, these three happy human beings did not consider this a misfortune, but a necessary evil of life. They loved each other, and when the parents looked upon the lovely, rosy countenance of their only child, they did not perceive that their bread was hard and heavy, they did not miss the butter and cheese without which the rich villagers seldom took a meal. And when, on Sundays, Anna went with her parents to church, in the faded red skirt, neat white body, and black bodice, which had been her mother's wedding-dress, she heard the boys whisper amongst themselves about her beauty and sweetness, and casting her eyes down with timid blushes she did not perceive the jeering smiles of the other girls who, though not as pretty, were

proud that they were richer and better dressed than the school-teacher's daughter.

But Death, in his inexorable manner, had disturbed this modest happiness. In a year he took the schoolmaster Detzloff and his wife from the little house which, to any one else, would have appeared a pitiful hut, but which, to them, seemed a paradise. In one year Anna became an orphan; she was entirely alone in the world, and, after she had given to her dear departed ones the tribute of her sorrows and tears, she had to arouse herself and create a new future. After death only, the villagers became aware of the great worth of the departed, they now admitted to the full the school-teacher's merits, and were anxious to pay to the daughter the debt owing to the father. As he had died partly from starvation, sorrow, and work, they wished to prove themselves generous to his daughter, and preserve her from the want and misery which had caused the death of her parents.

But Anna Sophia would be dependent on no one. To those who came in the name of the villagers to notify her that she would receive from them a monthly allowance, she showed her able hands, her brown, muscular arms, and, raising her sparkling eyes proudly to the new school-teacher, she said:

"From these alone will I receive help; they shall give me food and clothing; on them alone will I be dependent." She then went to seek work. The rich burgher of the village would gladly have taken so smart and industrious a girl into his house and paid her handsomely for her services. But Anna Sophia declared proudly that, though she was willing to work, she would be no slave; that she would sell her hands, but not her freedom.

Another house had been built and furnished for the school-teacher, because there was danger of the old one, in which the Detzloff family had lived, falling to pieces.

Anna Sophia, by the sale of some of the furniture, had bought the old, dilapidated hut for herself. And there, in her hours of leisure, she lived over the happy past. There she felt that she was still with her parents, and not alone and orphaned. In the morning, before leaving her home to go at her daily work, she entered the little garden at the back of the hut, where in the arbor, laden with dark-red blossoms, were the three chairs her father had woven in his idle moments, and the roughly-hewn deal table made by his axe. She took her seat for a moment upon the chair standing in the centre, and laid one hand upon the one to either side of her. Thus she had sat in the past, with her hands clasped in those of her parents. The Rhine flowed on as melodiously as before in the dim distance, the trees were as green, the flowers and blossoms as sweet,

the sky as blue. There was no change; all around her was as in former days, except these empty chairs. But Anna had only to close her eyes to see the beloved forms of her departed parents, to feel the pressure of their hands, and to hear them addressing her, in tones which love alone could have uttered, love alone understood. Then saying aloud, "Good-morning, mother! Good-morning, father!" she rose, with closed eyes, from her seat, and hastened from the arbor with the pleasant thought that she was followed by the loving gaze of her parents. She did not turn once, for then she would have seen that the arbor was empty, and she wished to preserve the sweet delusion to be the brighter and happier at her day's work. When, during the day, she saw the burgher's wife surrounded by her blooming daughters, she would say to herself: "I also have a father and mother at home, and they await me!" Then, when her day's work was finished, she hastened with a flying step to her home, whose solemn stillness resounded for her with the dear-loved voices of the past. Opening the bedroom of her parents, she cried: "Good-night, mother! Good-night, father!" Then she climbed up to her little attic, which had been her father's favorite room, and which, when she was with him, he had called a little spot of Eden. There stood his writing-table, and above it the book-case, which held her most precious treasures, her father's library. From the window the Rhine could be seen meandering along the smooth green meadows, finally loosing itself between the distant hills.

Her father had left her this blessed little spot, and hither she fled when her heavy day's work was over. There of an evening she stood, gazing thoughtfully out into the darkening twilight, and there daily she greeted the rising sun, repeating aloud her morning prayer. Then with eager hands she took from the book-case one of the large folios. From these books Anna Sophia drew all her knowledge. And when, during the long winter evenings, the village girls were busy spinning, she would tell them the stories she had read, no hand was idle, no eye drooping. She was looked upon as the guardian angel of the village; she knew some remedy, some alleviation for every illness, every pain. In a sick-room, she was all that a nurse should be, kind, loving, patient, and gentle. She was beloved by all, and all the village boys sought to gain her hand. For a long time she would listen to none of them, and flew in terror from those who broached the subject.

How the youngest son of the old shepherd Buschman had finally won her heart, she did not herself know. It is true, he was the handsomest, best-made boy in the village, but it was not for this that she loved him; for she had known him long ago, and had been

perfectly indifferent to him, until within the last few weeks. Why was it? Because he loved her so dearly, and had told her he would die if she did not listen to him. Many others had done and said the same thing, but it had never moved her sensibilities, nor had their threats terrified her. What, then, had won her cold, proud heart?

The old shepherd had been the occasion of their frequently meeting each other. For some weeks she had been in the habit, when her day's work was over, of reading to him the daily paper, which the good-hearted burgher always sent to the old man, who had six sons in the king's army; he had given his country six soldiers. Keeling by his side upon the meadow, Anna Sophia would first read to him, and then talk over the events of the war, and prophesy many a glorious victory. And then, Charles Henry, who worked on the same farm with Anna, joined them, speaking enthusiastically of the great, heroic king. In their inspired love for their great sovereign, their hearts had first met; he seemed to her a hero, because he had six brothers in Frederick's army; she saw laurels upon his brow, won by his brothers upon the battle-field. She loved him for his brothers' sake, and she was proud of being the bride of him of whom it was said, when he passed: "It is the old man's dearest child—God preserve him to his father, whose only prop he is!" The old shepherd was thinking of all this, as he sat in the midst of his flock upon the green meadow, gazing toward the corn-field in which Anna Sophia and his son were at work.

"God be praised!" murmured the old man; "that is the last sheaf; Anna will soon be with me."

At last, the happy moment had come. The old shepherd folded his hands, and a silent prayer arose from his heart for his absent sons. He then rose from his lowly seat, and whistled to his faithful Phylax to follow. The flock arrived at the village, and were driven by the dog into the sheep-pen, from which was heard the tremulous bleating of the lambs, who were rejoicing over their dams' arrival. Father Buschman waited impatiently until the last sheep had entered, and then hastened toward .the large farm-house to the left of the pen.

Anna Sophia was just leaving the house, paper in hand, and advanced, with a cheerful smile, to meet him.

"Father," said she, "I have the paper, and we are the first to read it. The good burgher and his wife are in the country, and the overseer allowed me to take it. But, hear, father, he says he glanced over it hastily, and saw something about a Prussian victory."

The old shepherd's face sparkled with joy, and he sought to draw Anna away with him.

"Come, come, my child," said he, "to my house, where it is still and quiet; there we will read of our king's victories."

But Anna shook her beautiful head.

"No, father," said she, "it would not be right to read the paper alone to-day. The king's victories belong to his people—to each one of his subjects; and every heart will beat more proudly when it hears of them, and thank God that He has blessed the weapons of their king. It is not for us to keep this joy from our men and women. Charles Henry, with the overseer's permission, had already assembled the villagers upon the open space under the beech-trees. See! all are hastening with their work. Come, father, we must read to our neighbors and friends our king's victories. A victory belongs to the whole village, but should there ever be news of a lost battle, then, father, we will read it to ourselves."

"God forbid that this should come to pass!" said the old man, following Anna to the place of general meeting.

CHAPTER II.

NEWS OF BATTLE.

THE inhabitants of the village had already assembled on the square, under the great linden; and as old Buschman now approached, supported by Anna Sophia's arm, they were joyfully greeted.

Anna waved the paper like a white flag in the air, and, hastening the old man forward impatiently, she exclaimed:

"Our king has won a battle!"

Shouts of triumph were the result.

"Did he whip the French, or the Austrians?" asked one of the peasants, as he drew close to Anna, and tried to seize the paper.

Anna drew it back hastily.

"The steward sent it to me, to read to the community, and I shall do so."

"Tell us, Anna," said another, "has he beaten the Russians or the cunning Saxons? I wish he could trample them all under foot."

"He will, if he has not yet done so," cried old Buschman. "Children, our king will conquer all his enemies; he is a hero, and has only brave fellows to fight for him. Just think of the thirty noble boys that our village alone gave him!"

"Read, Anna, read!" cried the curious crowd. And Anna, ready to please them, walked under the linden, and stepped upon the wooden bench that surrounded the tree.

Father Buschman placed himself at her feet, and several old men and women followed his example. The young people gathered around in groups, and gazed respectfully at the youthful girl, whose bright, beautiful face glowed as if lighted by the evening sun. The little boys, who had followed their parents from curiosity, were amusing themselves in turning somersets.

Anna now raised her voice and began to read in a bright tone. It was a brilliant and inspiring account of the battle of Losovitz, and Anna read it in breathless haste and burning cheeks. As she read how the Prussians were at first defeated by the powerful army of the Austrians under General Brown, whose terrific artillery sent death and ruin into the Prussian ranks, the women sobbed softly, and the men could hardly suppress their sighs. They breathed more freely when they heard that the king, adopting a new expedient, advanced a part of his cavalry into the centre of his weakened infantry, and thus turned the tide of battle. Their courage failed on hearing that this advantage was soon lost; the enemy still advanced in unbroken columns, and almost forced the Prussians to retreat. The left wing of infantry, commanded by the Duke of Bevern, which had fired unceasingly, had exhausted their ammunition, while the Austrian General Wied, who defended the post of Losovitz, kept up a brisk cannonading. The Prussian warriors pleaded loudly for powder and shot.

Anna stopped reading; her heart beat loudly; she leaned her head against the tree and closed her eyes in terror. The old people sitting at her feet prayed and wept aloud, and from the crowd there arose sounds of grief and despair. In their terror they had forgotten that it was of a victory and not a defeat they were to hear, and that the battle must at last have ended to their advantage.

"Read on, Anna," said the old shepherd, after a long pause. "Are we such cowards as not to be able even to hear an account of this murderous battle in which our sons were brave enough to fight?"

"Read on, read on!" was heard here and there.

Anna unclosed her eyes and raised the paper. Breathless stillness reigned anew. Anna read:

"In this fearful moment the Duke of Bevern felt that a decisive step must be taken, and springing in front of his troops with drawn sword, he cried: 'Boys, you have no more ammunition! Do not be discouraged! Fight with your bayonets!' These words, spoken by a brave and beloved leader, gave heart to all. They closed their ranks, and inspired by the example of their officer, attacked the enemy boldly. In vain Baron Stahremberg hastened forward with his six battalions—uselessly Baron Wied tried to defend the house of Losovitz in which his grenadiers had taken refuge. Nothing could

withstand the Prussians. Like a raging hurricane they fell upon the enemy, who were forced to give way to them. A part of the Austrian force sprang into the Elbe, and tried to save their lives by swimming. Losovitz was fired, and all its defenders fled. The Prussians had gained a complete victory."*

Anna Sophia could read no further. The delight of all was intense—wives embraced their husbands with tears of joy—old men thanked God aloud—and the boys, who had ceased their play and been listening attentively, made bolder and higher somersets and shouted more lustily. Anna Sophia alone said nothing. Her tall, slender, but full form was leaning against the tree—an inspired smile was on her lip, and her eyes, raised to heaven, beamed with holy fire. She stood as if in a dream, and at first did not hear old Buschman ask her to read on. When he repeated his request, she was startled, and turned her glance slowly down from heaven upon the joyful crowd that surrounded her.

"What do you wish, father?" she asked.

The old shepherd arose, and, taking his cap from his gray head, said solemnly, "You have read us of the victory, Anna Sophia; now read us of those who gave their lives for it. Tell us of the dead."

"Yes, read us a list of the dead!" cried the others, uncovering their heads respectfully.

Anna sought for the list, and read slowly the names of the fallen. Their faces brightened more and more; none belonging to them were dead. Suddenly Anna paused, and uttered a low cry; then looked at Father Buschman with a terrified expression. Perhaps the old man understood her, for he trembled a little, and his head fell upon his breast; but he raised it proudly again. Looking almost commandingly at Anna, he said:

"Read on, my daughter."

But Anna could not read. The paper trembled in her hand, and her face was pale as death.

"Read on," repeated the old man—"read on; I, your father, command you to read!"

Anna sighed deeply. "I will obey," she said, and casting a glance of inexpressible sorrow at the old man, two new names fell from her lips and tears to consecrate them. "Anton Buschman, Frederick Buschman," and then taking advantage of the breathless stillness, she added: "The two brothers were the first to attack the enemy—they died the death of heroes!" She ceased. The paper dropped from her trembling hands and fell at the old man's feet.

The weeping eyes of the crowd were turned upon old Buschman.

* "Characteristics of the Seven Years' War," vol. i., p. 63.

As if crushed by the storm, he had staggered to the bench; he bowed his head upon his breast that no one might see the expression of his face; his trembling hands clasped on his knees, made a touching picture of silent sorrow.

His son Henry, who had been standing with the others, stepped softly to him, and kneeling down, put his arms around the old man's neck and spoke to him tenderly.

The old man started up with terror—his glance turned from his son to the crowd, and met everywhere sympathizing and troubled faces. "Well," he asked, in a hard, rough voice, "why do you weep? Did you not hear that my sons died the death of heroes? Have they not fallen for their country and their king? It would become us to weep if they were cowards and fled in battle. But Anna Sophia told us they died the death of heroes. Therefore, let us think of them with love and pride. 'Blessed are the dead, for they see God!'"

He sank upon his knees and murmured low prayers for the repose of the dead, and now he wept for the first time. At his side knelt his son and Anna Sophia; and the crowd, overcome by emotion and sympathy, followed their example, and with bended knees murmured the pious prayers of the Church for the dead.

The solemn stillness was broken by the beating of drums and the tramping of horses. A company of infantry, headed by the drummer and fifer, marched up the street and approached the villagers, who, rising from their knees, gazed anxiously at the troops.

"They are Prussians," said the mayor, who was amongst the crowd.

"They are Prussians," repeated the crowd, with brightening faces.

Headed by the mayor, they went forward to meet and conduct them to the middle of the square, where they halted. The mayor then approached the officer and asked him what he desired.

The officer, after making the drummer a sign, who beat the roll powerfully, drew out a roll of paper and unfolded it. The villagers pushed forward and waited with breathless attention. Close to the officer stood the old shepherd, next to him his son and Anna Sophia, who was staring, pale and trembling, at the officer, who now began to read.

This paper commanded the unmarried men of the village to place themselves under the king's flag, and to take their places in the ranks of those who fought for their country. Harvest was at an end, and the king could now demand the fighting men of villages and cities to join him and share with him his dangers and his victories. The officer then commanded the mayor to give him early

the next morning a list of the unmarried men in the village, that he might call them out and conduct them to Cleve for further orders.

A hollow murmur ran through the crowd when the officer had finished. The joyful and inspired emotion they had just felt gave way to discontent and gloom. All had been ready to celebrate the victory, but found it far from desirable to enter the ranks.

The old shepherd looked angrily at the despairing crowd, and an expression of pious peace spread over his venerable countenance. Turning to the officer, he said, in a loud voice:

"I had six sons in the army; two fell in the battle of Losovitz, and my poor old heart still weeps for the dead; but it is also content that the king calls for another sacrifice. I have one other son; he is unmarried, has no one to take care of, neither wife nor child nor his old father, for, thank God, I still have strength to support myself. Go, then, my son Charles Henry, the king calls you; and if it must be so, lie down like your brothers in a heroic grave."

He ceased and laid his hand, as if with a blessing, upon his son's head; but Henry did not partake of his father's enthusiasm. His face was pale as death, and his powerful frame trembled as if with fever.

Anna Sophia saw it; her beaming face paled, and her eye sank down with shame.

The officer, who had noticed the dejection of the people, wished to give them time to recover.

"Leave every thing alone until to-morrow," he said. "To-morrow, sir mayor, you will hand me the list, and I am sure that the unmarried boys will obey their king's call with joy. Now, sir mayor, I beg you to conduct me to the court-house, where I will pass the night, and see that my soldiers find good quarters there, and in the village."

He nodded kindly to the people, and accompanied by the mayor, moved onward. The crowd followed them silently, and the gay village boys danced gleefully around the fine procession.

CHAPTER III.

THE CERTIFICATE OF ENLISTMENT.

Anna Sophia returned to her solitary home in deep meditation, and not even in the stillness of her room could she regain her accustomed serenity and cheerfulness. Her thoughts were far away; for the first time her room appeared to her gloomy and deserted. The memories of the past did not now speak to her, and when she threw

herself upon her bed, it was without having bid her parents good-night.

But even then she could find no rest. Strange visions were wafted before her waking eyes, wonderful dreams took hold of her senses. She saw her victorious king standing before her, his sparkling eyes beckoning her to follow him. Then she saw herself in the front of an army, the fluttering banner in her hand, the glittering shield on her breast, followed by many brave warriors, who were all gazing proudly upon her. And again she saw herself. But now she was all alone—alone by the side of an open grave, with a gaping wound in her breast, raising her weary eyes upward and murmuring with pale lips: "How sweet to die for one's country!" Then the brothers of her betrothed raised themselves slowly from among the dead, and signed to her to follow them. She seemed to hear them saying: "Revenge our death, our brother is faint-hearted!"

At this thought, she raised herself upon her couch.

"He is a coward," murmured she; "I saw him turn pale and tremble, and I felt as if a sword had entered my heart and destroyed all my love for him. Yes, he is a coward, and instead of rejoicing at the thought of a battle, he trembles."

She covered her face with her hands, as if to hide from the night the burning blush of shame that mounted to her brow. Thus she sat for hours motionless, as if listening to the voices whispering to her from within, until the first gleam of morning, the first ray of sun entered the open window to arouse her from her waking dreams.

She sprang from her bed, and dressed herself with trembling eagerness. The sun had arisen, and Charles Henry was no doubt already in the woods, at the place she had appointed to meet him yesterday morning. When bidding him good-by, she had whispered to him to meet her there in the morning at sunrise; she did not then know why she had appointed this meeting. She well knew it was not the longing to pass an undisturbed hour with her lover that had actuated her. Anna had no such wish; her heart was too pure, her love too cold. She had only felt that she would have something to say to him; she knew not what herself.

But now she well knew what she had to say; it was all clear, and therefore she was happy and cheerful. It seemed to her as if her soul had taken flight, and as if there was a lark within her singing songs of joy; and with these feelings she hastened down the road into the woods.

At the appointed place stood Charles Henry, and as his betrothed approached him, so proud, so smiling, sparkling with beauty and youth, it appeared to him that he had never seen her so exquisitely

beautiful; to her, as he advanced smilingly to meet her, he had never seemed so small, so devoid of attractions.

When they met, they looked at each other in amazement—there was a change in both.

"Anna Sophia," said Charles Henry at last, sadly, "you have something against me!"

"Yes," said she, "I have something against you, otherwise I would not have appointed this meeting here, where we can be heard by no one. Were this that I have to tell you something good, something pleasant, all the world might stand by and hear it; but as it is something painful, it must be heard by you alone."

She seated herself silently upon the ground, signing to Charles Henry to follow her example.

"It was here," said Anna, hastily, "that you first told me of your love."

"Yes, it was here, Anna," repeated he, "and you then told me that my love was returned, and that you would be my wife when we had saved enough to commence housekeeping. But still I have always felt that you were not kind to me, not as the other girls in the village are to their lovers. You have never permitted me to come under your window at night; I have never been allowed to take you in my arms and kiss you tenderly, as the others boys do their sweethearts; and never, no never, have you given me a kiss unasked; and, after all my entreaties, you kissed me only in the presence of my old father and his dog."

"It is not in my nature to be very tender," said Anna, shrugging her shoulders. "I read in one of my books lately a fairy tale, in which there was a young girl, of whom it was said that a bad fairy had bound her heart in iron, to prevent its full play; the girl was constantly bewailing this fatality, saying, 'I can only like, but never love.' Perhaps it is thus with me, but I do not weep over it, like the foolish girl in the book."

"And was this what you had to tell me?" asked Charles Henry, mockingly.

She gave him a look that sent the jeering smile from his lip.

"No, Charles Henry," said she, "this is not what I have to tell you."

"Well, what is it then, Anna, for this wounds me?" said he, impatiently.

"Perhaps the other will do so also," said she, sadly. "But it must come out, I cannot suppress it. Hear, Charles Henry, what I have to say, and if it is not true, forgive me. I fear you do not go willingly into the army, and that your heart does not beat with joy at the thought of becoming a soldier."

"You are right," said Charles Henry, laughing, "I do not go willingly; and how should it be otherwise? it is a wild, disorderly life, and it strikes me it cannot be right for men who, our pastor says, should love each other like brothers, to vie in cutting off each other's limbs, and to fire upon each other without mercy or pity, as if one were the butcher, the other the poor ox, who only resists because he does not wish to give up his life; and in this case all would be the butchers, and none the oxen, therefore each one gives his stroke bravely to preserve his own life."

"It would be sad if it were as you say," said Anna, shaking her head, "but it is not so. The true soldier does not think of his life; he thinks of his country, for which he will gladly shed his blood—of his king, to whom he has sworn to be true—and of the glory which he will gain for himself!"

Charles Henry looked in amazement upon Anna Sophia's agitated countenance.

"How do you know all this?" said he. "Who has told you that these are soldiers' thoughts?"

"I have read of it in my books, Charles Henry; in one of them there is the history of a man whose name was Leonidas. He defended, with three hundred of his soldiers, against many thousands of his enemy, a narrow passway. He well knew that he could not conquer; his soldiers also knew it, but they preferred death rather than the humiliation of laying down their weapons and praying for mercy. And every man of them died joyfully, giving up his life for his country."

"Well, I must say they were fools!" cried Charles Henry, excitedly; "if I had been there, I would not have done so—I would have sued for pardon."

"Yes," said Anna Sophia thoughtfully—"yes, I think you would have done as you say; and I have been wondering all through the past night whether you would willingly and joyfully go to battle?"

"I? God forefend; I will not go joyfully—I will not go at all! This morning I intend going to our pastor to receive from him a certificate, showing that I cannot join the army, as I have a decrepit old father to support, who would die without me."

"Charles Henry, your father is not decrepit, nor very old, nor would he starve if you were not here, for he can support himself."

"But he may, at any moment, become unable to help himself, and then he would need me; I would have no rest day or night when far away, but would be thinking of my poor old father, lying sick and helpless in his hut, with no one near to give him a piece of bread or a cup of water."

"Let not this trouble you, Charles Henry," said Anna, solemnly.

"I swear to you that I will love him and care for him as a daughter. He shall want for nothing; and when he can work no longer, I am strong and healthy enough to work for both of us. Go with a peaceful mind, I will be here in your place."

"No, no!" cried Charles Henry, turning pale; "I will not join the army. I cannot, I will not be separated from you, Anna. You have sworn to be my wife, and I will beseech the pastor to join us to-day; then they cannot take me away from here, for I will have a father and a wife to take care of."

"Not for me, Charles Henry, for I will not marry yet. Have we saved enough to commence housekeeping? Is this a time to marry and build a nest, when war, misery, and ruin are raging throughout the country? No, no! Charles Henry, we cannot marry now."

"Because you do not wish it, Anna. But it shall be, for I have your promise, and you must keep it. Ah, Anna Sophia, you do not know what a longing I have to call you my wife!"

"But I have no such longing," said she, drily; "no desire whatever to marry; and I will tell you, that though you wish to marry to-day, it is not out of love for me, but to save yourself."

His eyes sunk before the large, searching ones fixed upon him.

"To save myself, and from what, Anna Sophia?"

"From being a soldier, Charles Henry! For last evening, I read upon your countenance that you were devoid of courage "

"You read that?"

"Yes, Charles Henry, fear was stamped upon your brow."

"Well, then," said he, after a pause, "you have read aright. I have no courage, I fear for myself. I am not accustomed to stand still, while some one is pointing his gun at me, and to cry, 'Long live the king!' when the cannon-balls are flying around me; to attack men who have done me no harm, and to whom I wish to do none. When I think upon the possibility of my being compelled to do this, I tremble, and my heart ceases to beat. Do not require it of me, Anna, for if I have to go, I will fly at the first fight, and come back here. They may then shoot me as a deserter, if they choose; I prefer to die rather than to kill any one else."

Anna Sophia sprang from her seat with a cry of horror.

"I thought so," said she, in a low voice; and, crossing her arms upon her breast, she walked to and fro, thoughtfully.

Charles Henry looked at her in amazement, but had not the courage to speak to her; for she was so completely changed, that he was almost afraid of her. There was something so cold and proud about her to-day, something aristocratic in her beauty. He thought to himself, "It is thus that a queen would look when dressed as a peasant."

Anna Sophia stood still before him at last, and gave him a tender, almost pitiful glance.

"Charles Henry," said she, "you shall not join the army; I will not suffer it."

He sprang from his seat with a cry of joy.

"You will then marry me, Anna Sophia?" said he, exultingly. "You will become my wife, so as to keep me here? You love me too much to let me go!" He tried to embrace her, but she waved him off.

"No," said she, "I will not marry you, but, still, you must not join the army; for if you became a deserter, it would break your father's heart, and it would be a disgrace, not only for me, but for the whole village. Think well over what you have said. Perhaps you are mistaken in yourself, and only dislike joining the army on your poor father's account. Question your conscience and your heart, and remember, Charles Henry, that God will hear your answer. Do you truly believe that you are wanting in courage—that you would fly from the battle-field?"

"As truly as there is a God above us, I believe it, Anna Sophia. It is not belief, it is certainty. It is not in my nature to be brave; I was not brought up to it, and am therefore without it. I am an apt farmer, but would be a bad soldier."

Anna Sophia sighed deeply, and covered her face with her hands. Thus she stood for some time in front of her betrothed, and he saw the large tears, stealing through her fingers, fall upon the grass, to be transformed there by the sun into sparkling jewels.

"Why do you weep, Anna Sophia?" asked he, gently. "What has so suddenly made you sad?"

Her hands fell slowly and wearily from her face. "I am not weeping now," said she; "it is past—I have shed my last tear. Now we must settle upon what is to be done, for you cannot be a soldier."

"But they will force me," said he, "for I am tall, strong, and healthy—just the build for a soldier."

Anna Sophia raised herself proudly and stood beside him. "I am as tall as you," said she.

"It is true," replied Charles Henry, laughing, "we are of the same height. We can scarcely fail to have tall, good-looking children some of these days!"

She shrugged her shoulders slightly, and looked at him in a strange manner. "I am as strong and as healthy as you," said she, "my sight is as sharp, my hand as sure. Were I Charles Henry Buschman, I would be a good soldier, for I have courage—I would not tremble at the cannon-balls."

"But, fortunately, you are not a man," said Charles Henry, laughing. "You are the beautiful Anna Sophia, who is this day to become my wife to save me from being a soldier."

"No, Charles Henry; the war must be at an end, and Charles Henry Buschman must have returned a brave soldier, before I can marry him."

"You mean," said he, with trembling lips—"you mean I must be a soldier?"

"As you have said, they will not let you off. You are a strong, healthy youth—you are unmarried, and have no one to support, for your father can take care of himself. Why, then, as the king is in need of soldiers, should they pass you by?"

"It is too true," murmured Charles Henry, despondently. After a slight pause, he said: "But I will not be a soldier—I cannot! For it is true I am a coward—I have not a particle of courage! That is born with one, it cannot be acquired; I have it not, and cannot therefore be a soldier."

"Nor shall you become one," said Anna, with determination.

"What can you do?"

"I will join the army in your stead!"

Charles Henry stared at her. He was on the point of laughing, but the sight of her inspired, earnest countenance, in which a world of determination was expressed, sobered him completely.

"I will do as I said, for I have great courage, and when I think of a battle my heart beats loudly, not with fear but with rapturous joy. To me, nothing would be more glorious than to die, banner in hand, surrounded by the thunder of cannon, and to cry out exultingly, as the blood flows from my wounds, '*Vive le roi! vive la patrie!*'" Her form was raised majestically, her countenance beamed with inspiration, a daring fire sparkled in her eyes—she was so changed in form and expression, that Charles Henry drew back from her in terror.

"I am afraid of you, Anna Sophia," said he, shuddering. "You are changed—you are not like yourself."

"No," said she; "nor am I the same. Yesterday I was Anna Sophia Detzloff—from to-day I am Charles Henry Buschman. Do not interrupt me—it must be! You shall not break your father's heart—you shall not bring disgrace upon the village. The king has called you—you must obey the call. But I will go in your place; you shall remain quietly at home, thrashing your corn, cutting your hay, and taking care of your kind old father, while I shall be upon the battle-field, fighting in your place."

"Do you then love me well enough to give your life for me?" cried Charles Henry, with streaming eyes.

She shook her head slowly, thoughtfully. "I do not know if it be love," said she. "I only feel that it must be done—there is no other outlet but this to help us all. Let us speak no more about it—only tell me that you accept it."

"It is impossible, Anna Sophia."

"Only accept it, and all will be right."

"I cannot. It would be an everlasting shame to me."

She pressed her teeth tightly together—her eyes gleamed with anger. "Hear me out," said she. "Go, or stay—whichever you do—I do not remain here! I must away and seek my fortune. I have never been happy, as yet—upon the battle-field I may be. I have nothing to lose, and can therefore win all. Well, say! Am I to be a soldier in your stead?"

"If you really wish it, I must yield," said he, sadly. "You say you have nothing to lose, but I, I have you, and I cannot, will not lose you. And as you would be angry with and leave me if I said 'No,' I prefer saying 'Yes.'"

Anna Sophia gave a cry of delight, and, for the first time, gave Charles Henry a willing kiss. "Many, many thanks, Charles Henry," said she. "Now we will all be happy."

Charles Henry sighed. He could not bring himself to trust in Anna's prophecy.

"And now," said she, eagerly, "how shall we go about it?"

CHAPTER IV.

FAREWELL TO THE VILLAGE.

In the course of the day, Charles Henry accompanied the other boys to the village, where an officer was to call out the names of those who were drafted. As his name was called out, he did not change countenance—he remained as gay and cheerful as before, while the other boys were gazing sadly, thoughtfully before them. Then the officer handed each of them a ticket upon which their names were printed, and ordered them to go immediately to the nearest city, Cleve, and receive their uniforms. Charles Henry requested a day's leave, as he had various preparations to make for his father, to whom he wished to will the little property he had inherited from his mother. The officer granted him one day. Charles Henry left the house gayly, but instead of turning his steps toward the little hut inhabited by his father, he took the path leading to the old school-house, where his bride lived.

She stood at her door waiting for him. "Well," said she, hastily, "is all right?"

"Yes," said he, sadly, "I am drafted."

She grasped the printed ticket from his hand and hid it in her bosom. "Now," said she, "you have but to bring me a decent suit of clothes."

"My Sunday suit, Anna," said he, smiling. "It is new; I intended to be married in it."

"I shall not hurt it," said she. "There is a merchant at Cleve, whom I know to be good and honest—I will leave the clothes with him, and next Sunday you can walk to the city for them."

"You will not even keep them to remember me by?"

"It is impossible for me ever to forget you, Charles Henry, for I shall bear your name."

"From now on, throughout your whole life, you shall bear it, Anna. For when you return, you will remember your promise, and marry me. You will not forget me when far away?"

"How do I know I shall return?" said she. "A soldier's life is in constant danger. There can be no talk of marriage until this war is over. But it is now time we were asleep, Charles Henry. You and I have many things to do to-morrow; we must arrange our household affairs—you for the sake of appearances, and I in good earnest. Good-night, then, Charles Henry."

"Will you not kiss me on this our last night, Anna Sophia?" said he, sadly.

"A soldier kisses no man," said she, with a weary smile. "He might embrace a friend, as his life ebbed out upon the battle-field, but none other, Charles Henry. Good-night."

She entered and bolted the door after her, then lighting a candle she hastened to her attic-room. Seating herself at her father's table, she spread a large sheet of foolscap before her and commenced writing. She was making her will with a firm, unshaken hand. She began by taking leave of the villagers, and implored them to forgive her for causing them sorrow; but that life in the old hut, without her parents, had become burdensome to her, and as her betrothed was now going away, she could endure it no longer. She then divided her few possessions, leaving to every friend some slight remembrance, such as ribbons, a prayer-book, or a handkerchief. Her clothes she divided among the village wives. But her house, with all its contents, she left to Father Buschman, with the request that he would live in it, at least in summer.

When she had finished, she threw herself upon her bed to rest from the many fatigues and heart-aches of the day. In her dreams her parents appeared to her—they beckoned, kissed, and blessed her.

Strengthened by this dream, she sprang joyfully at daybreak from her couch. She felt now assured that what she was about to do was right, for otherwise her parents would not have appeared to her. She now continued the preparations for her journey cheerfully. She packed all her linen clothes into a small bundle, and then scoured and dusted her litle house carefully. Dressing herself with more than her usual care, and putting her testament in her pocket, she left the house.

Anna took the road leading to the parsonage; she wished to go to confession to her old pastor for the last time. He had known her during the whole of her short life; had baptized her, and with him she had taken her first communion. She had confessed to him her most secret thoughts, and with loving smile, he absolved what she deemed her sins. He would not break the seal of confession, and she therefore opened her heart to him without fear.

The old pastor was deeply moved, and laying his hand upon her head he wept. When she had bid him a long and loving adieu, and had wiped the tears from her eyes, she left the parsonage and hastened to the woods, where Father Buschman was tending his sheep. As soon as the old shepherd saw her, he beckoned to her his welcome.

"I did not see you throughout the whole of yesterday, Anna Sophia," said he, "and my heart was heavy within me; there was something wanting to my happiness."

"I will remain with you to-day to make up for yesterday's absence," said she, seating herself beside him and kissing him tenderly. "I could not work to-day, for my heart aches; I will rest myself with you."

"Your heart aches because Charles Henry must leave us," said the old shepherd. "You would prefer his remaining at home, and not being a soldier?"

"No, I would not prefer this, father," said she, earnestly; "would you?"

The old man looked thoughtful for some time, then said:

"It will be a great sorrow to me, Anna Sophia, for he is the last remaining light of my youth, and when he goes all will be dark and gloomy for me. It does me good to see his bright, handsome face; to hear his gay morning and evening song; and when you two are sitting beside me hand in hand upon the old bench at the front of our little hut, my youth comes back to me. I see myself sitting on the same bench with my dear old woman—it was our favorite seat when we were young. When Charles Henry leaves me, I not only lose him, but my whole past life seems to vanish away."

"You would, therefore, prefer he should remain at home?" said Anna, anxiously.

"If it were possible," said he, "but it is not. His king has called him, he must obey."

"But he may, perhaps, be allowed to stay, father, if you will declare that you are too old, too weak to support yourself, and wish the only prop of your old age to remain with you, the authorities at Cleve may, perhaps, grant your request."

The old shepherd shook his head slowly and thoughtfully, and said:

"No, we will not make the attempt; it would be deception, and could bring us no honor. I am not too weak to earn my own living, and it would be a disgrace to Charles Henry if I bought him off from his duty. The world might then think he was a coward, and had not courage enough to fight."

"Do you think it a disgrace for a man to be wanting in courage?" said Anna Sophia, gazing at him as if her life depended upon his answer.

"I think so," said he, calmly; "it is as bad for a man to be without courage as for a woman to be without virtue."

Anna Sophia raised her dark, glowing eyes to heaven with an expression of deep thankfulness. Then giving way to her emotion, she threw her arms around the old shepherd, and, leaning her head upon his shoulder, she wept bitterly. He did not disturb her, but pressed her tenderly to his heart, and whispered occasionally a few loving, consoling words. He believed he understood her sorrow; he thought he knew the source of these tears. She was weeping because all hope of preventing her betrothed from being a soldier was now gone.

"Weep no more, my child," said he, at last; "your eyes will be red; it will sadden Charles Henry, and make it harder for him to say good-by. See, there he comes to join us—do not weep, my child."

Anna raised her head and dried her eyes hastily.

"I am not weeping, father," said she. "I entreat you do not tell Charles Henry that I have been crying—do not, if you love me. I will promise not to be sad again."

"I will be silent, but you must keep your word and be cheerful, so as not to sadden the poor boy."

"I will."

Anna Sophia kept her word. She gave Charles Henry a bright, cheery welcome. While she was joking and laughing with the old man, evening came upon them, and as it cast its shadows about, Charles Henry became more and more silent and sad.

It was now time to drive home the fold; the sun had set, and Phylax had collected his little army.

The old shepherd arose. "And now, my children," said he, "take leave of one another. It is the last sunset you will see together for many a long day. Swear to each other here, in the presence of God and of his beautiful world, that you will be true to each other, that your love shall never change."

Charles Henry looked timidly, beseechingly at Anna Sophia, but she would not encounter his gaze.

"We have said all that we had to say," said she, quietly, "we will therefore not make our parting harder by repeating it."

"It will make parting much easier to me," cried Charles Henry, "if you will swear to be true, and always to love me. Though many years may pass, Anna Sophia, before we meet again, I will never cease to love you, never cease to think of you."

"This will I also do, Charles Henry," said Anna, solemnly. "My thoughts will be with you daily, hourly; your name will be constantly upon my lips!"

Charles Henry turned pale. He understood the ambiguous meaning of this oath, and it cut him to the heart.

"And now, good-night, Anna Sophia," said the old shepherd; "to-morrow evening, when your work is done, I will await you here. We will have to love and console each other. Good-night once more!"

"Good-night, dear father," whispered she, in a voice choked with tears, as she pressed a burning kiss on his brow.

The old man took her in his arms and embraced her tenderly, then whispered:

"To-morrow we will weep together, Anna Sophia."

Anna tore herself from his arms.

"Good-night, father!"—and then turning to Charles Henry, she said: "When do you leave for Cleve?"

"To-night, at ten," said he; "I prefer going at night; it is much hotter in the day, and I must be at Cleve at eight in the morning. I will be at your door to-night, to take a last look at you."

"It is all right," said she, dryly, turning from him and hastening home.

Night had come; the village night-watch had announced the tenth hour; no light gleamed through the windows—the busy noise and bustle of day had given place to deep quiet. The whole village was at rest, every eye was closed. No one saw Charles Henry as he passed with a bundle under his arm, and took the path leading to the old school-house—no one but the moon, that was gleaming brightly above, and was illuminating the solitary wanderer's path.

For the first time he found Anna Sophia's door open—he had no

need to knock. He entered undisturbed with his bundle, which contained the suit of clothes Anna had desired.

Half an hour later the door was opened, and two tall, slenderly-built young men left the house. The moon saw it all; she saw that the man with the hat on, and with the bundle on his back, was none other than Anna Sophia Detzloff, daughter of the old school-teacher. She saw that the one who was following her, whose countenance was so ghastly pale—not because the moon was shining upon it, but because he was so sad, so truly wretched—that this other was Charles Henry Buschman, who was coward enough to let his bride go to battle in his stead! The moon saw them shake hands for the last time and bid each other farewell.

"Let me go a little bit of the way with you, Anna Sophia," said Charles Henry; "it is so dark, so still, and soon you will go through the woods. It is best I should be with you, for it is so fearfully gloomy. Let me accompany you, Anna Sophia."

"I have no fear of the woods," said she, gently; "the stars above will watch over and guard me, the moon will shed her light upon my path, it will not be dark. I must go my way through life alone—I must have no fear of any thing, not even of death. Leave me now, and be careful that you are seen by no one during the whole of to-morrow in my house. No one will go there to-morrow, for I have left word in the village that I am going on a visit to my aunt at Cleve. I have prepared your meals for you; the table is set, and above, in my room, you will find books to read. You can stand it for one day, to-morrow evening you will be released. Farewell, Charles Henry!"

"Do not go, Anna Sophia," said he, weeping and trembling; "I will go. I will force my heart to be courageous! You must stay here."

"It is too late," said Anna; "nor could you do it, Charles Henry. You are afraid of the dark woods, and what comes beyond is much more fearful. We have taken leave of each other, the worst is past. Kiss your father for me, and when at times you are sitting upon the old bench, remind him of Anna Sophia."

"I will obey you," whispered he.

But Anna was not listening to him; she had turned from him, and was hastening down the road.

The moon saw it all! She saw the tears steal slowly from Anna Sophia's eyes, and fall unknown to herself upon her cheek, as she turned her back upon her old home and hastened forward to a life of danger, privation, and want. She saw Charles Henry leaning upon the door of the old school-house, staring after Anna with a trembling heart until the last glimpse of her was lost in the distant

woods. He then entered the school-house and fastened the door behind him. His heart was heavy and sorrowful, he was ashamed of himself; he was sorry for what he had done, but had not the strength to change it; and as he went over Anna Sophia's departure, he was inwardly rejoiced that he himself was to remain at home.

On the morning of the second day after Anna's departure, there was a great stir in the village, there were two astounding reports to excite the community. Charles Henry Buschman had returned from Cleve; they had told him he could be spared for a while. The second report was that Anna Sophia had not returned from her visit. They waited for several days, and as she did not come, Charles Henry went to the distant village where her aunt lived. But he returned with sad news. Anna Sophia was not there, her aunt had not seen her.

What had become of her? Where was she? No one could clear up the mystery. Many spoke of suicide; she had drowned herself in the large lake to the left of the village they said, because her betrothed had to leave her. The old pastor would not listen to this; but when the aunt came to take possession of her niece's worldly goods, he had to bring forward the will Anna had given him, in which she had willed her all to Father Buschman. And now no one doubted that Anna had laid hands upon herself. The mystery remained unsolved. Every one pitied and sympathized with Charles Henry, who had lost all his former cheerfulness since the death of his bride!

CHAPTER V.

THE PRISONER.

Two years had passed since Frederick von Trenck entered the fortress of Magdeburg. Two years! What is that to those who live, work, strive, and fight the battle of life? A short space of time, dashing on with flying feet, and leaving nothing for remembrance but a few important moments.

Two years! What is that to the prisoner? A gray, impenetrable eternity, in which the bitter waters of the past fall drop by drop upon all the functions of life, and hollow out a grave for the being without existence, who no longer has the courage to call himself a man. Two years of anxious waiting, of vain hopes, of ever-renewing self-deception, of labor without result.

This was Trenck's existence, since the day the doors of the citadel of Magdeburg closed upon him as a prisoner. He had had many bitter disappointments, much secret suffering; he had learned to

know human nature in all its wickedness and insignificance, its love of money and corruption, but also in its greatness and exaltation, and its constancy and kindness.

Amongst the commandants and officers of the fortress whose duty it was to guard Trenck, there were many hard and cruel hearts, which exulted in his tortures, and who, knowing the king's personal enmity to him, thought to recommend themselves by practising the most refined cruelties upon the defenceless prisoner. But he had also found warm human souls, who pitied his misfortunes, and who sought, by every possible means, to ameliorate his sad fate. And, after all, never had the night of his imprisonment been utterly dark and impenetrable. The star of hope, of love, of constancy, had glimmered from afar. This star, which had thrown its silver veil over his most beautiful and sacred remembrances, over his young life of liberty and love, this star was Amelia. She had never ceased to think of him, to care for him, to labor for his release; she had always found means to supply him with help, with gold, with active friends. But, alas! all this had only served to add to his misfortunes, to narrow the boundaries of his prison, and increase the weight of his chains.

Treachery and seeming accident had, up to this time, made vain every attempt at escape, and destroyed in one moment the sad and exhausting labors of many long months. The first and seemingly most promising attempt at flight had miscarried, through the treason of the faithless Baron Weingarten, who had offered to communicate between Trenck and the princess.

For six long months Trenck had worked with ceaseless and incomparable energy at a subterranean path which would lead him to freedom; all was prepared, all complete. The faithful grenadier, Gefhart, who had been won over by the princess, had given him the necessary instruments, and through the bars of his prison had conveyed to him such food as would strengthen him for his giant task.

Nothing was now wanting but gold, to enable Trenck, when he had escaped, to hire a little boat, which would place him on the other side of the Elbe—gold, to enable him to make a rapid flight.

Gefhart had undertaken to deliver Trenck's letter to the princess, asking for this money. This letter, written with his own blood upon a piece of linen, had been forwarded through Gefhart's mistress, the Jewess Rebecca, to Weingarten. He delivered it to the princess, and received, through Pöllnitz, two thousand thalers, which he did not hand over to Rebecca, but retained for himself, and betrayed to the king Trenck's intended flight.

This was but a short time before Weingarten's own flight; and while he was enjoying the fruit of this base fraud in security and

freedom, poor Trenck was forced to descend still lower in the citadel, and take possession of that frightful prison which, by special command of the king, had been built and prepared for him, in the lowest casemates of the fortress.

The king was greatly exasperated at these never-ending attempts of Trenck to escape; his courage and endurance made him an interesting and admired martyr to the whole garrison at Magdeburg.

Frederick wished to give to this garrison, and to all his soldiers, a terrible example of the relentless severity with which insubordination should be punished, to prove to them that mortal daring and mortal energy were vain to escape the avenging hand of royal justice.

Trenck, who, in the beginning, had only been condemned to arrest in Glatz for six months, had, by his constant attempts at escape, and the mad and eloquent expression of his rage, brought upon himself the sentence of eternal imprisonment, in a subterranean cell, which, by express command of the king, was so prepared, that neither guards nor soldiers were necessary to his detention. A jailer only was needed, to lock the four doors of the corridor which led to Trenck's cell. It was as little dangerous to guard this poor prisoner as to approach the lion bound by chains and hemmed in by iron bars.

Trenck was indeed manacled like a wild beast. A chain clanked upon his feet, an iron girdle was around his waist, to which hung a heavy chain, fastened to a thick iron bar built in the wall; manacles were made fast to each end of an iron bar, to which his hands were bound. The most cruel wild beast would not have been so tortured; some one would have had pity on him, and mercifully ended his life. But this creature, thus tortured, groaning and clanking his heavy chains—this creature was a man, therefore there was no pity. It would have been considered a crime to put an end to his life; but slowly, day by day, to murder him, was only justice.

The king had made it the personal duty of the commandant, Bruckhäusen, to guard Trenck. He declared that if he allowed Trenck to escape, he should not only lose his place and rank, but take Trenck's place in his fearful cell. This was a frightful menace to the ambitious and harsh commandant, Bruckhäusen, and, of course, led him to take the severest precautions. It was he, therefore, who had bound Trenck, and, whenever he visited the poor prisoner in his cell, he rejoiced in the artistic construction of his chains, and looked proudly upon his work. He saw with delight that Trenck was scarcely able to drag his heavy chains two feet to the right or left, or to raise the tin cup to his parched lips, with his hands thus fastened to an iron bar; and as often as he left the cell, he exclaimed, with an expression of malicious joy:

"I have tamed him forever! he will not escape me!"

But Trenck was not tamed; his courage was not broken. In this crushed and wasted form dwelt a strong soul, a bounding heart; he had been bound in chains thought to be indissoluble. Trenck alone did not believe this; he trusted still in the magic power of his will, in his good star, which had not yet been quenched in darkness.

In the wall to which the chain was fastened, his name was built, in red tiles; a gravestone marked the spot upon which his feet moved, upon which a death's head and the name of Trenck was engraved. Under this stone there was a vault, and when one looked at the moist walls, from which the water constantly trickled, and at the dark cell, which for six months had not been cheered by one ray of light, they might well suppose that the gravestone would soon be lifted, and the vault opened to receive the poor prisoner, upon whose grave no other tears would flow. These dark walls were, as it appeared, softer and more pitiful than the hearts of men.

Trenck was not subdued; the death's head and his name upon the gravestone did not terrify him! It was nothing more to him than a constant reminder to collect his courage and his strength, and to oppose to his daily menace of death a strong conviction of life and liberty.

If his prison were dark, and warmed by no ray of sunshine, he leaned his head against the wall, closed his eyes, and his vivid imagination and glowing fancy was the slave of his will, and painted his past life in magic pictures.

The prisoner, clad as a convict, with his hands and feet chained, became at once the child of fortune and love; the exalted favorite of princes, the admired cavalier, the envied courtier, and the darling of lovely women.

When hunger drove him to eat the coarse bread which was his only nourishment, and to satisfy his thirst with the muddy water in the tin pitcher at his side, he thought of the meals, worthy of Lucullus, of which he had partaken, at the Russian court, by the side of the all-powerful Russian minister Bestuchef; he remembered the fabulous pomp which surrounded him, and the profound reverence which was shown him, as the acknowledged favorite of the prime minister of the empress.

When no one whispered one word of consolation or of sympathy, for all trembled at the ceaseless watchfulness of the commandant—when the rude silent jailer came daily and placed his bread and water before him and left him without word or greeting—then Trenck recalled the sacred, consecrated hours in which love had whispered sweet names and tender words. This love still lived—it watched over and shone down upon him—it was a star of hope.

Why should Trenck despair, when love lived and lived only for him? No, he would not die—he would never be buried under this gravestone. Beyond these thick, damp walls lay the world—the living, active, blooming world. It was only necessary to break these chains, to open the five heavy doors which confined him to his dark prison, and life, liberty, the world, honor, love, belonged to him!

"Is not my will stronger than chains and bolts?" he said. "Has not the spirit wings by which she can take flight, mocking at prisons and at torture?"

His spirit was free, for he believed in freedom: when his chains clanked around him, it seemed to him as if they whispered of speedy liberty—as if they exhorted him in soft, harmonious tones, to cast them off and become a free and happy man.

At last there came a day when he could no longer resist these alluring voices. If he could break these chains the first step was taken, and only the doors remained to be opened. By close observation, he had discovered that the inner door of his prison was of wood. The faithful Gefhart had managed to inform him that the other doors were also of wood. He had also conveyed to him a small, sharp knife, the most precious of all earthly treasures, for with this he hoped to obtain his freedom.

"But the chains!" First must the chains be broken—first must his right hand be free! And it was free. Although the blood was bursting from the nails Trenck forced his hand through the manacle. Freedom greeted him with her first rapturous smile. Alas, the handcuff upon the left hand was too narrow to be removed in this way. With a piece of his chain he broke off a fragment of stone which he used as a file, and in this way he liberated his left hand. The iron ring around his waist was fastened only by a hook to the chain attached to the wall. Trenck placed his feet against the wall, and bending forward with all his strength, succeeded in straightening the hook so far as to remove it from the ring. And now there only remained the heavy wooden chain fastened to his feet, and also made fast to the wall. By a powerful effort he broke two of the links of this chain.

He was free—free—at least to stand erect and walk around his miserable prison. With a feeling of inexpressible joy he raised himself to his full height—it enraptured him to move his arms, so long and painfully confined—he extended them widely and powerfully, as if he wished to clasp the whole outside world to his heart.

Could the commandant Bruckhäusen have cast one glance into this horrible, noiseless cell, he would have trembled with rage and apprehension. The unchained giant stood with glad smiles, and flaming eyes, and outstretched arms, as if adjuring the spirits of the

under-world to come to his assistance. But the commandant lay in careless security upon his soft, white couch; his eyes were closed; they could not pierce the dark cell where a fellow-man, with loudly-beating heart, but silent lips, called rapturously to the fair goddess Liberty, and hastened to clasp her in his arms.

Stepping forward, he sought the door of his prison, and kneeling before it, he took out his knife. He tried to cut out a small piece and to ascertain the thickness of the wall; this was short work—the door opened inside, and it was easy to cut around and remove the lock. It was made of simple oak boards. Once convinced of this, Trenck prudently sought his mattress in order to obtain rest and strength. It was impossible to commence his labor then. The night was far spent, and every morning at eight o'clock the jailer came to inspect him and bring his bread and water. His visit must be over before he could begin his work—he must possess his soul in patience. What were a few hours' waiting to him who had waited long, dreary years?—a fleeting moment, scarcely sufficient to accustom him to his new happiness, to enable him to collect his thoughts and bear quietly the rapturous conviction of approaching freedom.

"Yes, I will be free; this is the last night of my imprisonment." But while waiting in this dreary prison he could enjoy one pleasure long denied him—he could stretch his limbs upon his bed without being martyred and crushed by his bonds—without hearing the clank of chains. With what gladness he now stretched himself upon his poor couch!—how grateful he was to God for this great happiness!—how sweet his sleep!—how glorious his dreams!

Trenck awaked in the early morning, revived and strengthened. It was time to prepare for the daily visitation—to replace his chains, and take possession of his gravestone. His eyes accustomed to the darkness soon discovered the broken link of the chain, which he hid in his mattress. With a piece of his hair-band he fastened the chain to his feet, hung the second chain to the ring upon his waist, and now it only remained to place his hands in the manacles fastened to the iron bar. He had filed the handcuff from his left hand and that was easy to resume, but it was impossible to force his right hand through the ring; he had succeeded in removing it by a mighty effort the evening before, but it was consequently greatly swollen. He took again his little piece of stone and tried to file it apart, but every effort was in vain. Nearer and nearer came the hour of visitation, and if his right hand were free when the jailer came, all would be discovered. It seemed to him as if he heard already the bolt of the first door. With a last, frightful effort, he forced his hand in the manacle; his fingers cracked as if the bones were

broken; it was scarcely possible for him to suppress a shriek of anguish. But the danger was even at the door, and the blessing of freedom was not too dearly bought even by this anguish; he bore it with heroic fortitude, and though his whole figure trembled with pain, he conquered himself. He leaned back breathlessly and almost unconsciously against the wall; and now the bolt really moved, and the jailer, followed by two officers, entered.

The visitation began. In this small cell, which held nothing but a mattress, a seat built in the wall, and a small table, there was but little to examine. A fleeting glance at Trenck's chains, which were rattling around him, and the search was over, and the jailer and officers left the prison. Trenck listened in breathless silence till he heard the bolt of the fifth door rattling, and now life and movement were in his form and features. It was time to work. But alas! it was impossible. The swollen, blood-red, throbbing hand could not possibly be withdrawn from the handcuff. He must control himself—must wait and be patient. He resolved to do this with a brave heart, in the full conviction that he would attain his liberty.

At last, after three days, the swelling disappeared, and he found he could withdraw his hand without difficulty. The visit was no sooner over, than his chains fell off. For the last time! God grant that for the last time he had heard them clank!

A herculean work was before him, but Freedom was without and awaiting him, and he panted to embrace her. Seizing his little pocket-knife, he stepped to the door and commenced his labor. The first door was not difficult, it opened from within. In half an hour the work was done, and Trenck advanced and extended his hands before him till they encountered another obstacle. This was the second door. But here was indeed a weary task. The door opened on the outside and a heavy cross-bar besides the lock secured it. It was necessary to cut entirely through the door above the bar, and spring over it. Trenck did not despair—bravely, unwearily, he went to work—the perspiration fell from his brow and mingled with the blood which trickled from his lacerated hands. Trenck did not regard it; he felt no pain, no exhaustion. Freedom stood before the frowning citadel, and awaited his coming. At last it was achieved; with trembling hands he lifted the upper part of the door from the hinges and sprang into the outer room.

Here light and sunshine greeted him. Weary months had gone by since he had seen the sun—the soft light of heaven on the fresh green of earth—and now all this was his once more. There was a small window in this corridor, and not too high for him to look abroad. He turned his eyes, filled with tears of the purest joy,

upon the cloudless heavens; he followed with longing eyes the flight of the doves, who moved like a black cloud across the sky and disappeared on the horizon. He inhaled with long-drawn breath the fresh, glad air, which appeared to him laden with the fragrance of all the flowers of the world. He gave himself up for a few moments to this first rapturous enjoyment, then conquered himself and examined his surroundings with a thoughtful, searching eye.

He saw that his prison was built against the first wall of the fortress, and was exactly opposite an entrance, before which stood a high palisade; this he must climb before he could reach the outer wall. But the night was long, and he saw that the guard patrolling upon the wall disappeared from time to time for more than five minutes; he must therefore have some distance to walk before he returned to the same spot. While his back was turned, must Trenck climb the palisade and wall.

Trenck sprang back upon the floor with a glad and happy heart. What he had seen of the free, outer world had given him new life. With cheerful resolution he stepped to the third door. This was constructed like the first, and gave him but little trouble—it was soon opened, and Trenck passed on the other side.

The sun went down, and the twilight obscured his view, as this was completed. And now his strength was exhausted, and his swollen and bleeding hands, from which the flesh hung in shreds, refused their service. With inexpressible despair he looked at the fourth door, which opened from the outside, and it was again necessary to cut through the whole breadth of the door in order to advance.

Worn out and trembling, he seated himself near the door and leaned his aching head against the cool wood. He sat thus a long time, till he felt that his blood was flowing more calmly, and the wild, quick beating of his pulse had subsided—till the pain in his hands and limbs was quieted, and he had won new strength. He then rose from the floor, took his knife, and recommenced his work. He moved more slowly than before, but his work progressed. It could scarcely be midnight, and half the door was cut through. The moon shed her peerless rays through the little window and lighted his work, and showed him what remained to be done. In two hours he would finish, and then remained only the fifth door which opened on the wall, and which Gefhart assured him was not difficult. In three hours the work would be done—in three hours he might stand without, in the fresh, free air of heaven, himself a free and happy man.

With renewed courage and renewed strength, after a short rest, he went again to work. He thrust his knife into the opening and pressed powerfully against the wood. Suddenly his hand seemed

paralyzed—on the other side of the door he heard a light clang, and with a hollow cry of woe, Trenck sank upon the floor. The blade of the knife was broken and had fallen on the other side. Now he was lost! There was no longer hope of escape! He rushed to the window; would it not be possible to escape in that way? No, no! It was not possible to pass through this small opening.

Trenck sank upon his knees before the window and stared into the heavens. His pallid lips murmured low words. Were they prayers?—were they curses?—or was it the death-rattle of dead hopes and dying liberty? At last he rose from his knees; his face, which had been that of a corpse, now assumed an expression of firm resolve. Staggering and creeping along by the wall, he returned to his prison, which he had left so short a time before full of happy hopes. He reached his bed and laid down upon it, holding the broken knife in his hand. Not to sleep, not to rest, but to die! He could think of no other hope—no other way than this. "Yes, I will die!" His life's courage, his life's energy, was exhausted. He had closed his account with the world. Slowly he raised his hand aloft with the broken knife, and collecting all his strength for one last, decisive blow, he bowed and cut the vein of his left foot, then raised his head with a smile of triumph, and stretching out his left arm he forced the stump of his knife deep into the large vein of his elbow. The deed was done! He felt the warm blood flowing from his veins —he felt that with it also was sweeping by the miserable remnant of his buried existence. His thoughts wandered, and a happy insensibility overpowered him, and now his blessed spirit floated chainless and free beyond this drear prison. The necessities of this poor life and its tortures were overcome.

But what was that? Who called his name lightly from without, and made the air of this living grave tremble with unwonted tones?

When this call was repeated the second time, Trenck felt a light trembling in his whole frame. The whisper of his name had called back his fleeting spirit. The godlike dream of release was at an end; Trenck lived again, a suffering, defenceless man. For the third time he heard his name called—for the third time a voice, as if from heaven, rang, "Trenck! Trenck!"

Trenck gathered all his little strength, and replied:

"Who calls me?"

"It is I," said the faithful Gefhart; "have I not sworn to bring you help? I have crept over the wall only to say to you that I think of you—that you must not despair—that help is nigh, even at the door. An unknown friend has sent you a greeting by me; he has given me a roll of gold to be useful in your flight. Come near, I will throw it to you through the window."

"It is too late, Gefhart, all is too late! I lie bathed in my blood; to-morrow they will find me dead!"

"But why die?" cried the fresh, strong voice of Gefhart; "why wish for death, now when escape is possible? Here there are no guards, and I will soon find a way to furnish you with tools. Try only to break your prison—for the rest I will remain responsible."

"Alas, I tried to-night and I failed!" said Trenck. A few tears stole from his eyes and rolled slowly over his hollow cheeks.

"You will succeed better another time, Baron Trenck; whenever I am on guard here I will seek an opportunity to speak with you, and we will arrange all. Do not despair. I must go, the sun is rising, and I may be seen. Do not despair! God will help you—trust fully in me."*

The voice had long since died away, but Trenck listened still for those tones, which seemed like the greeting of one of God's angels; they illuminated his prison and gave strength to his soul. No, no, now he would not die! He felt his courage revive. He would defy fate, and oppose its stern decrees by the mighty power of his will.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRISON BARRICADE.

No, he would not die! With trembling hands he tore his coarse shirt into strips, and bound with it his bleeding veins. When he had thus closed the portals upon death, he seated himself to meditate upon the means of avoiding still severer punishment. He soon arose from his bed, much strengthened by the short rest he had had. With an iron bar that he had forced from his bed he hammered into the wall until the stones, around which the mortar had become loosened owing to the dampness of the cell, fell at his feet. He piled them together in the centre of his cell, and then hastened to barricade the second door he had attempted to force. The lower part of it was still held on by the lock; over the opening at the top he passed the chains several times that he had forced from his limbs, forming a sort of trellis-work, which rendered entrance from without impossible.

When all his preparations were made, when he was ready for the contest, he seated himself upon his strange barricade, and there, wearied out by suffering and anxiety, he fell into a sweet sleep. He was awakened by the sound of many loud voices. Through the iron lattice of the second door he saw the wondering, terrified coun-

* "Frederick von Trenck' Important Memoirs."

tenances of the city guard, who were endeavoring to unloose the chains. With one bound Trenck was beside his door, balancing in his right hand a large stone, and in the left his broken knife. He cried out, in a furious voice:

"Back! back!—let no one dare to enter here. My stones shall have good aim; I will kill any one who ventures to enter this room. Major, tell his excellency, the commandant, that I will remain no longer in chains. I wish him to have me shot down at once! I will thank him for my death, but I will curse him if he forces me to become a murderer. For I swear, before God, I will stone any one who seeks to overpower me. I will die—yes, die!"

It was a fearful sight—this man, thin, wan, naked, and bleeding, who seemed to have risen from the grave to revenge the sufferings of his life. His countenance was ghastly pale, his hair lying in matted locks on his neck; and the long beard, covering the lower part of his face, and falling almost to his waist, gave him a wild, insane look, which was heightened by the fearful brightness of his eyes.

With terror and pity they gazed at the poor unfortunate one whom despair had driven to this extremity; who remained deaf to all their representations, all their entreaties, still swearing that he would kill any one who approached him. It was in vain that the officers besought him in the most tender manner to submit—that the prison chaplain came and implored him, in the name of God, to give up this useless resistance. God's name had no effect whatever upon him. What was God to him—to him on whom no one had pity, neither God nor man; he whom they treated like a wild beast, and fastened in a cage? It was in vain that the commandant ordered the guard to storm the fortified door. Trenck received them with stones, and sent the two foremost ones reeling to the floor, causing the others to fall back in disamy.

Trenck raised his hand with a shout of exultation, armed with another stone, and fixing his wild, triumphant glance upon the commandant, he cried:

"You see it is useless to endeavor to take me while living. Order the guards to fire! Let me die!"

The commandant lacked the power to do as Trenck requested, however willing he may have been to grant his request. Instead of continuing his threats, he withdrew into another chamber, signing to the major to follow him.

Trenck still stood with uplifted arm when the major returned. And now, as the stern, much-feared commandant had left, no one withheld the tender sympathy that was almost breaking the hearts of the lookers-on. Trenck saw it written upon every countenance.

and he to whom a look and word of pity had been so long unknown, felt deeply touched. His expression became milder, and as the major, whom he had known in the other prison, commenced to speak to him in gentle, loving tones, and implored him not to cause his ruin, for all the punishment would fall upon his head, as, through his negligence, Trenck had been allowed to retain his knife —as he finished, Trenck's arm fell to his side, and tears streamed from his eyes.

"No one," said he, gently—"no one shall become unhappy through me, for misery is a fearful thing. I will make no further resistance, if you will swear to me that no heavy chains shall be put upon me—that I shall suffer no unworthy punishment."

The major promised him, in the commandant's name, that if he ceased to resist, no further notice would be taken of the affair.

"Then," whispered Trenck, with a bitter smile, "I must suffer anew—suffer forever."

He approached the door and drew off the chains.

"Now, guards," said he, "the door can be opened. The wild beast has become tame."

Then, with a low moan, he sank fainting upon the floor. He was lifted up and laid upon his bed. Tears were in every eye, but Trenck did not see them; he did not hear their low, whispered words of sympathy and friendship. Death, from whom Trenck had once more been torn, had sent her twin sister, insensibility, to cause him to forget his sufferings for a while.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE OF COLLIN.

Lost!—the battle was lost! This was the cry of woe throughout the Prussian camp—this was the fearful cry that palsied the hands of those who could not endure defeat.

The Prussians who had defeated the enemy at Losovitz and Prague, were condemned to yield the palm of victory at Collin to their enemy's commander, Marshal Daun. They had fought bravely, desperately for this victory; and when all was over, death would have been preferable to defeat.

The Prussians were beaten, though their king, Ziethen, and Moritz von Dessau—all of them heroes—were in the field. At the first thought of the possibility of losing the battle, there was a fearful panic throughout the army.

"We are lost! lost!"—and this cry caused them to throw down their arms and fly, as if followed by a thousand furies; as victory was impossible, they wished at least to save their lives.

It was in vain that the officers implored them to rally again and fall upon the enemy. They did not heed. In vain that the king himself rode among them, pointing with his sword to the enemy, and crying:

"Forward! forward, boys! Would you live forever? Death comes to all!"

They looked at him stubbornly; they feared not now his piercing, eagle glance, his royal countenance. They looked and said:

"We have worked hard enough to-day for eightpence," and then continued their flight.

But the king could not yet be brought to believe the truth. He still trusted in the possibility of victory. He clung with desperation to this hope; he let his voice be heard—that voice that generally had such power over his soldiers; he called them to him, and pointed out to them the enemy's battery; he ordered the band to play a martial air to inspire the men. This call brought a few faithful soldiers around him—only forty warriors were ready to follow their king.

"Forward! we will take the battery!" cried he, as he pressed on, regardless of the shower of the enemy's balls.

What was this to him? what had he to do with death—he whose only thought was for the honor and glory of his army? If he succeeded in taking this battery, it would encourage his desponding soldiers. They would once more believe in the star of their king, and assemble bravely around him. This it was that gave hope to the king.

Without once looking back, he pressed onward to the battery—when suddenly, amid the clatter of trumpets and the roar of cannon, this fearful question reached him:

"Sire, would you take the battery alone?"

The king reined in his horse and looked behind him. Yes, he was alone; no one was with him but his adjutant, Major von Grant, who had asked this question.

A deep groan escaped the king; his head fell upon his breast, and he gave himself up to the bitterness of despair.

A cannon-ball fell beside him—he did not heed it; he was too utterly wretched. Another ball struck his horse, causing it to prance with pain and terror.

Major Grant grasped the king's bridle.

"Sire," said he, "are you determined to be shot? If so, let me know it, and with your majesty's permission I will withdraw."

The king raised his head, and looked at the daring adjutant with a bitter smile.

"We will both withdraw," said he, gently, advancing toward the generals who had been seeking him throughout the battle-field. He greeted them with a silent bow, and passed without a word. Whither he was now going, none of the generals knew, but they followed him in silence.

The king rode up the slight eminence from which, on that morning, his army had fallen like a glittering avalanche upon the enemy. This avalanche was now transformed into a stream of blood, and corpse upon corpse covered the ground. He reined in his horse and gazed at the Austrian army, who were now withdrawing to their camp, midst shoutings and rejoicings, to rest after their glorious victory. Then, turning his horse, he looked at the remains of his little army flying hither and thither in the disorder of defeat. A deep sigh escaped him. Throwing his head back proudly, he called Prince Moritz von Dessau and the Duke of Bevern to his side.

"Sirs," said he, firmly; "the fate of to-day is decided. All that now remains for us to do, is to deprive the enemy of the advantages of this victory. Collect our scattered regiments, and lead the army through the defile of Plainan, back to Nimburg. There we will decide what is best to do. I go on before you, and wish no one to accompany me."

He turned his horse, rode slowly down the hill, then took the road leading to Nimburg. Lost in deep thought, he continued his way. He was followed by his faithful body-guard, who, at a sign from Prince von Dessau, had hastened after him. A few flying officers and sergeants joined him. These were the followers of Prussia's hero-king; but they were suddenly scattered. A soldier galloped up to them, and stated that he had just encountered a regiment of the enemy's hussars, who were pursuing them. There was a cry of terror throughout the guards, and then, as if with one accord, putting spurs to their horses, they fled in wild disorder.

The king continued his way, slowly and quietly—slowly and quietly a few of his guard followed him. In funereal silence they passed through the defile of Plainan, and reached at last Nimburg, the king's appointed place of meeting.

The king now reined in his horse, and, looking back, he became aware of his followers. Beckoning to his adjutant, he ordered him to get quarters for the soldiers, and then to inform the generals that he awaited them.

"Where?" asked the astonished adjutant.

"Here!" said the king, pointing to a fallen pump, a few steps from where he stood.

He dismounted, and, when the adjutant had disappeared, he threw himself upon the old pump, and rested his head upon his cane. Thus he remained a long while, thinking painfully of the occurrences of the past day. He remembered that he had appointed the site of to-day's battle, without listening to the warnings of his experienced generals, and that Moritz von Dessau had implored him to put his army in another position, before attacking the enemy. He remembered the prince saying to him—"It would be impossible for an attack from this point to succeed," and his entreating him to draw back and change his position. He remembered, also, his riding up to the prince, with his naked sword, and inquiring, in a threatening tone, "whether he meant to obey or not?" And Prince Moritz von Dessau had obeyed; his prophecy had been fulfilled—the battle was lost.

"Ah," whispered the king, "how poor, how weak is man! The happiness of an hour intoxicates him, and he defies his coming fate; he should know that happiness is a fleeting guest, but that misfortune is the constant companion of man. I have allowed myself to be deceived by fortune, and she has turned against me. Fortune is a woman, and I am not gallant. The fickle goddess watches carefully, and makes good use of my faults. It was a great fault to dare, with twenty-three battalions of infantry, to attack an army of sixty thousand men, half of whom are cavalry. Ah! my great ancestor, Frederick William, what have you to say of your poor nephew, who, with his little host, is fighting against Russia, Austria, a large part of Germany, and a hundred thousand French troops? Will you assist me? Will you be my guardian angel, praying for me above? Yes, yes! you will assist me if I assist myself, and do not give way to my faults. Had I been killed in to-day's battle, I would now be in a safe haven, beyond the reach of storms. But now I must swim still farther into the stormy sea, until at last I find in the grave that rest and peace which I shall never attain in this world. This is a consoling thought; it shall rouse me again to life. I am glad I did not die to-day. I can still repair my fault. All the responsibility will be thrown on me; it will be said, the battle would have been won, but for Frederick's obstinacy. But let this be! It is a necessary consequence that a warrior should suffer for the faults of his followers. Through me this battle was lost, and in history it will go down thus to future generations. But many a victory shall still be recorded, and as the defeat was owing to me, so shall the victory also come through me alone. I alone will bear upon my shoulders Prussia's honor, Prussia's glory. It lies now, with me, bleeding on the ground. It shall be lifted and sustained by me alone!" And raising his burning eyes

heavenward, he seemed to see these future victories branded upon the skies. Gradually the inspiration left his countenance, giving place to deep thought. He had delivered his funeral oration to the lost battle, and now gave his thought to his future victories. He drew lines and figures upon the sand with his cane. It may have been a drawing of the last or a sketch of the next battle.

The king was so absorbed in this occupation, that he did not perceive his generals, who, having reached Nimburg with the wreck of the army, hastened to the place of appointment, and were now assembled at a respectful distance from him.

Frederick continued to sketch. The generals gazed at him in silence, anxiously awaiting the moment when he would arouse himself. He suddenly looked up, and did not seem surprised to see them; lifting his hat slightly, he greeted them, and rose from his lowly seat.

"It is well, sirs, that you are here," said he. "We must now make our preparations for the future; for our enemies, having beaten us once, will think us no longer capable of resisting them, and will fall upon us with renewed courage. We will convince them, gentlemen, that though we are stricken to the ground for a moment, we are not crushed, not dead. We will convince them that we still live to tear from them the laurels they have taken from us this day. Prince von Dessau, hasten immediately to our army at Prague. I command the Prince of Prussia to raise the siege there at once. He shall call all his generals together, and hold council with them as to the most suitable mode of retreat. He shall determine with them how the siege can best be raised; to avoid, as far as possible, the appearance of flying from their enemy. With gay music they should leave their posts; they should not all leave together, but in groups, so as to mislead the enemy. In small companies should also the retreat through Bohemia to Lausitz be made, for it would be difficult for a large army to pass this mountainous district; but they should remain as near together as possible, choosing the widest, most convenient roads. These are the orders you are to deliver my brother, the Prince of Prussia, and his generals. I give to the prince the command of this portion of my army, and require of him to hasten to Lausitz. I will join him in Bautzen. And then, gentlemen, we will seek an occasion to repay our enemies for their civilities of to-day."

The generals had listened to him with breathless attention; and as he now dismissed them, with a glorious smile upon his lips, they repeated unanimously his last words, "We will repay our enemies for their civilities."

As if inspired by this shout, the soldiers, lying about the market-

place, at a slight distance from the king, broke into a loud hurrah, and shouted, "Long live our king!"

The king turned slowly toward them, but when he saw all that remained of his noble army, he became pale, and pressed his lips tightly together, as if to suppress a cry of horror. Then advancing, followed by his generals, to where his weary, wounded soldiers were lying, he said:

"Children, is this all that is left of you?"

"Yes, father, we are the last," said an old gray-headed officer, standing before the king. "There were many thousands of us, now there are two hundred and fifty."

"Two hundred and fifty!" repeated the king, with a bitter smile.

"And it was not our fault," continued the old officer, "that we did not fall with the rest. We fought as bravely as they; but Death did not want us. Perhaps he thought it best to leave a few of us, to guard our king. We all think so! Some were left to repay those abominable Saxons for their to-day's work."

"And why alone the Saxons?" asked the king.

"Because it was those infamous Saxon troops that hewed down our regiment. They fell upon us like devils, and striking their cursed swords into us, cried out, 'This is for Striegau!'"

"Ah! you see," cried the king, "that while beating you, they could but think of the many times you had conquered them."

"They shall think of this again, father," said another soldier, raising himself with great pain from the ground. "Wait until our wounds have healed, and we will repay them with interest."

"You are wounded, Henry?" said the king.

"Yes, your majesty, in the arm."

"And old Klaus?"

"Is dead!"

"And Fritz Verder?"

"Dead! He lies with the others upon the battle-field. There are seven hundred and fifty of us in heaven, and only two hundred and fifty on earth. But those above, as well as below, still cry—'Long live our king!'"

"Long live our king," cried they all, rising.

The king made no reply; his eye passed from one to the other pale, exhausted countenance, and an inexpressible sorrow overcame him.

"Dead!" murmured he, "my faithful guards dead! seven hundred and fifty of my choice men have fallen." And overpowered by his emotion, the king did not force back the tears welling to his eyes. They stole softly down his cheek, and Frederick was not ashamed. He did not blush, because his warriors had seen him weep.

"Children," cried the old officer, after a pause, and wiping the tears from his weary eyes, "from now on it will be glorious to die; for when we are dead, our king weeps for us."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INIMICAL BROTHERS.

"THE king comes! The king is entering Bautzen!"

This announcement brought pale terror to the hearts of the Prince of Prussia and his generals. They who had heretofore sprang joyfully to meet the call of their king, now trembled at his glance. They must now present to him the sad and despoiled remnant of that great army which, under the command of the Prince Augustus William of Prussia, had made the retreat from Lausitz.

It had, indeed, been the most fearful retreat ever attempted by the Prussian troops. It had cost them more than the bloodiest battle, and they had suffered more from hardships during the last few days than ever before during a whole campaign. They had marched over narrow, stony, rugged mountain-paths, between hills and horrible abysses, sometimes climbing upward, sometimes descending. Thousands died from exhaustion; thousands pressed backward, crushed by those in the front; thousands, forced onward by those in the rear, had stumbled and fallen into fathomless caverns, which lay at the foot of these mountain passes, yawning like open graves. If a wheel broke, the wagon was burned; there was no time for repairs, and if left in the path, it interrupted the passage of the flying army. At last, in order to facilitate the flight, the provision-wagons were burned, and the bread divided amongst the soldiers; the equipages and pontoon-wagons were also burned. Exhausted by their unusual exertions, beside themselves from pain and unheard-of suffering the whole army was seized with a death-panic.

The soldiers had lost not only all faith in their good fortune, but all faith in their leaders. Thousands deserted; thousands fled to escape death, which seemed to mock at and beckon to them from every pointed rock and every dark cavern.*

While one part of the army deserted or died of hunger or exhaustion, another part fought with an intrenched enemy, for three long days, in the narrow pass of Gabel, under the command of General von Puttkammer. They fought like heroes, but were at last obliged to surrender, with two thousand men and seven cannon. Utterly

* Warner's "Campaigns of Frederick the Great."

broken by these losses, dead and dying from starvation and weariness, the army drew off toward Zittau.

There was but one thought which sustained the wearied, and lent strength to the starving. In Zittau were immense magazines of grain. In Zittau, the rich Saxon city, which throughout all Saxony was called the gold-mine, they dared hope for rest and opportunity to recover.

Before this unhappy army reached Zittau, Duke Charles of Lothringen was in advance of them. With wanton cruelty he reduced the industrious, open city to ashes, destroyed the Prussian magazines, and, with his army, trampled upon the ruins and the corpses of this unfortified town. The Prussians had now lost their last hope. They encamped by Lodau, and after a short rest, advanced to Bautzen, which city the king had appointed for the reunion of the two army corps. And now, one day after the arrival of this miserable remnant of an army, the king entered the camp of Bautzen.

The unhappy moment was at hand; they must now meet the stern eye of the king. These were bold, heroic generals—the Prince of Prussia, Von Bevern, Von Wurtemberg, Von Dessau, Winterfeldt, Goltz, Ziethen, Krokow, and Schmettau. Bravely, triumphantly had they fought in all previous battles, but now, amidst defeat and disaster, they must meet the eye of the king. This was more dangerous to them than the most deadly battle, and they shrank appalled before this fearful encounter.

Silently, and frowning darkly, the generals mounted their horses, and rode down the highway—the Prince of Prussia in advance, and by his side the Duke of Wurtemberg. And now, in front of them, in an open space, they saw the king. He was on his horse, and looked sternly toward them. The Prince of Prussia trembled, and, involuntarily checking his horse, he stooped with a weary smile toward the duke.

"I have a feeling," said he, in low tones, "as if my fate was advancing threateningly, in the form of my brother. It glowers upon me with a glance which announces that I am condemned to death. Look, duke! my sentence is written in the raging eye of the king."

"The king's wrath will not fall upon you alone," whispered the duke, "but upon us all. This is a wild tempest, which threatens us all in the same moment with destruction."

"A tempest? yes! the thunder rolls over all, but the stroke of lightning falls only upon one; and I—I am the one," said the prince, solemnly; "I am the sacrificial offering chosen by the king, with which he will seek to propitiate the frowning gods of destiny."

"God forbid!" said the duke, sadly. "The king will be just!

He will see that these frightful misfortunes were unavoidable; that we are innocent." He will listen to our explanations; he—"

"I tell you," said Augustus William, "he will demand a subject for his scorn. I shall be this sacrifice! Well, so let it be; I am willing to be offered up for my fatherland! Let us go onward, duke." He drew his bridle and they rode forward.

The king remained immovable in the same spot, his proud head erect, and his icy glance fixed steadily upon them.

As they drew nearer, and could no longer doubt that he recognized them, the king moved slowly round, and turned his back upon them. They were greatly embarrassed—undecided what to do; they looked to the prince, in the hope that he would advance and announce himself to the king, and compel him to notice them. Prince Augustus William did not advance; he stood firm and immovable, as if moulded in brass. No muscle of his face moved, but his pale and tightly-compressed lips slighly trembled. The generals followed his example. Silently, immovably they stood behind him, their eyes fixed upon the king, who remained still with his back turned to them.

There was a long and painful pause; not a word was spoken. Those who were arranging the tents for the king's troops were moving actively about, and now they drew near with their measuring-line, exactly to the spot upon which the king stood. He was forced to take another position; he turned his horse, and stood exactly in front of his generals. His countenance was not calm and cold, it flashed with rage. The Prince of Prussia had the courage to brave his anger, and, drawing near, he bowed profoundly.

The king did not answer his greeting, and, indeed, appeared not to see him. A black cloud was on his brow, and it became still blacker as the other generals dared to approach and salute him. Suddenly, in that tone of voice he was accustomed to use only upon the field of battle, the king called out:

"Goltz, come here!"

The general advanced from the circle, with a firm military bearing, and approached the king.

"Goltz," said he, loudly, and looking as if he wished to crush the unhappy general—"Goltz, tell my brother and the other generals that if I did justice, I would take off their heads—Winterfeldt only excepted."*

A murmur of discontent was heard amongst the generals, and every eye was fixed angrily upon Winterfeldt. He turned deadly pale, and looked down, as if ashamed of the exception the king had

*The king's own words.—"Characteristics of the Seven Years' War."

made, and dared not gaze upon those whose guilt he shared, and whose punishment he escaped.

The king fixed his eye so piercingly upon the murmurers, that they felt his glance upon them, without daring to meet it. Only the Prince of Prussia drew still nearer to the king.

"Sire," said he, in a calm voice, "my duty demands that I should give your majesty a list of the army. Will you be graciously pleased to acccept it from me?" He took the paper from his pocket, and handed it to the king, who snatched it from him hastily, and turned his back again upon them.

"Withdraw, messieurs," said he, "your presence oppresses me; you remind me of the disgraceful defeat my army has suffered, through the guilt of its leaders."

"Sire," said the Duke of Bevern, "will your majesty listen to our justification?"

"Justification!" cried the king, with flashing eyes—"if this unparalleled disgrace which you have all brought upon my army could be justified, I might pity; but I must curse you. Go, sir duke, I will not look upon you." And springing with youthful activity from his horse, he entered his tent.

The generals were alone. They looked upon each other's death-like faces with suppressed scorn upon their trembling lips, and tears of rage in their eyes.

"Shall we bear this shame silently?" said one.

"Shall we allow ourselves to be scolded like schoolboys?" said another. "Shall we suffer foul accusations to be brought against us, and no opportunity granted for justification?"

As the murmur of the generals became louder, the Prince of Prussia, who had been standing aside in deep thought, came forward. An expression of calm resolve was written upon his noble features.

"No, gentlemen, you shall not suffer this. I undertake to justify you to the king."

"Do not attempt it, prince," said the Duke of Wurtemberg; "at least, not in this hour. The king will crush you in his rage!"

Prince Augustus William cast his eyes to heaven, saying, "I am in the hands of God. I would rather die by the king's rage than to endure his contempt. The king made me commander-in-chief of this army corps, and accuses me of failure in duty! He shall hear my defence. As a Hohenzollern, as a general, as his brother, I demand the right to make my report." He advanced hastily toward the king's tent, but the Duke of Bevern held him back.

"Will your royal highness allow me to accompany you?" said he. "The king's scorn fell upon me personally, and I also demand a hearing."

"No one shall accompany me," said the prince, solemnly. "None but God shall be witness to what we have to say. Wait for me, therefore, gentlemen. I shall soon return." He bowed and entered the king's tent.

"Announce me to his majesty," he said to the guard, who returned immediately and opened the inner door of the tent.

The prince entered with a firm step and head erect—the door closed behind him—the two brothers were alone.

The king sat upon a camp-stool by a little table covered with papers. He held in his hand the paper which the prince had given him, and appeared to be reading it eagerly. The prince stood for some time silently at the door; at last, weary of waiting, he entered the tent and stepped directly before the king.

King Frederick arose and fixed his great eyes scornfully upon his brother. "I gave you an army corps of thirty-six thousand men, and you bring me back sixteen thousand! Where have you left my soldiers?"

"They lie in the narrow pass of Gabel—in the chasms of the Erz mountains—they have died of hunger and thirst, and they have deserted," said Prince Augustus, solemnly.

"And you dare to tell me this?" said the king.

"I dare to tell you what fate has brought upon us."

"Fate?" cried the king, shrugging his shoulders. "Fate is ever the excuse for the crimes and follies of man. Your obstinacy and your disobedience are what you call fate. Prince Augustus William of Prussia, how did you dare to act contrary to my instructions, and to conduct this retreat through the mountains, and not by the highways?"

"Your majesty gave me no instructions," said the prince, eagerly. "Your majesty commanded me to take counsel of my generals in every movement, and I did so. I should not have retreated through the mountains had they not advised it in consideration of the near approach of the enemy. But I do not say this to excuse myself, or to accuse them, but to prove to my brother the king that it was unjust to place me under the guardianship and direction of his generals—unjust to place a mentor by my side who is my enemy—who hates me and seeks my destruction!"

"Do you dare to reproach me?" said the king, in a thundering voice.

"In this hour I dare all," said the prince, steadily. "This is a decisive hour between you and me, my brother. It is a strife of intellect, of spirit; and although I know I am too weak to conquer, I will at least fall with honor—with my sword in my hand! I shall fall, but you shall not consider me a cowardly mute who does not

dare to defend himself. I know that I have been slandered to you; I know that those whom you honor with your friendship are spies upon my every word and look, and report to your majesty what they hear and what they do not hear—what is true and what is not true. I know I have been robbed of my brother's love, but I will not consent to the loss of his respect and consideration. Sire, Winterfeldt wrote to you; I know that he did so. If he wrote that I was obstinate and self-willed, and alone answerable for the disasters of the army,* I call God to witness that he slandered me. Your majesty speaks of instructions. I received none. I would remind you that I entreated you in vain to give me partial instructions—that I wrote down your majesty's verbally expressed opinions, and implored you to add to them your approval, or written remarks and explanations.† Your majesty returned the paper without signature or remark. I alone should bear the responsibility, and if this sad retreat should end disastrously, the whole world might say, 'This was the work of the Prince of Prussia!' Look you, my brother, I know, I feel this. The lost battle of Collin demanded an offering, and I was predestined for the sacrifice."

The king uttered a cry of rage, and advanced against the prince without outstretched arm, but suddenly recovered his self-control, folded his arms, and stared coldly at the prince.

"I have listened quietly to you, hoping always I might possibly find in your words a glimmer of excuse for your blasphemous deeds. I find none. Have you finished, or have you still something to say?"

"I have this to say, sire: I demand that my conduct be investigated."

"Woe to you if I do this—woe to you if I listen to your bold, insane demand!" Stepping before the prince, and fixing his eye upon him, he said: "You have acted not like a Prussian, not like a general of Prussian troops, but like an enemy—like an ally of Austria and of France, who sought only for means to destroy the Prussian army and put an end to this war. I know that it never had your approval, because directed against your beloved France."

"Ah, my brother, you distrust me!" cried the prince, fiercely.

"Yes, I distrust you," said the king, eagerly—"I distrust you, and you merit it! You have just said that this was an important hour between us. Well, then, it shall be so. I accept this strife of words which you have the audacity to offer me. This was not cautiously, not wisely done, on your part. You yourself have armed me—my weapons are sharp. I have suffered much during my whole

* Warner's "Campaigns of Frederick the Great."

† Recueil des Lettres du Roi de Prusse et du Prince de Prusse."

life because of you, my brother. This began even in the days of our childhood, and will, as it appears, follow me to the grave. You were the favorite of my father, and I remember well that he one day proposed to me to relinquish the throne in your favor. I withstood him. I did not pay for this opposition with my life, but with my life's happiness. I will not account this against you; perhaps you were innocent; but it appears to me you have not forgotten our father's wish—that you look upon me as a usurper, who has robbed you of your throne. You act as if you had the right to measure and criticise all my undertakings, and to make yourself a judge over me. I undertook this war with the conviction of my right and my royal duty. You dared to protest against it. You dared, in the presence of my generals, to speak of your claims and the claims of your children! Oh, sir, you were already thinking of the time when you would lay my head in the vault and walk over my dead body to a throne! In that hour you stood no longer by my side as my subject, as my brother, as my friend, but as an ambitious prince royal, who hates his king who keeps him from his crown, and who is hated of the king because he reminds him of his death! And during no moment since then could you have denied this hatred."

"Oh, my brother!" said the prince, painfully, "your own hatred has blinded you and made you unjust. I have always loved and admired you, even when I did not approve of your undertakings."

"And yet it was you, you alone," said the king, hastily, "who dared, after the fatal disaster of Collin, to utter loud cries of grief and despair. When my courier brought to you and the generals and the army the mournful news of the lost battle of Collin, in place of strengthening and encouraging my warriors—consoling and inspiring them with confidence in their royal leader—you dared, in the presence of all my generals, to cry and whimper, not over destiny, not over the inconstancy of fortune, but over the conduct of your brother and your king. In place of justifying me to my silent and cast-down generals, you accused me boldly, and made my misfortune my crime." *

"It is true, murmured the prince, "distress and grief overcame me and robbed me of my reason."

"Even because you were so wise and bold a warrior," said the king, with a cold smile, "I wished to give you an opportunity to prove your genius to my whole people, whose sovereign you will one day be. Because you wept and clamored before my generals over my faults as a leader, I wished you to prove to them that you were capable of commanding and bringing good out of evil. I trusted

* Retzow's "Characteristics of Frederick."

you with my third army corps—I expected it to retreat safely and surely under your command, after I had almost led it to destruction in a bloody, disastrous battle. I gave you the opportunity to make yourself a god in the eyes of my soldiers, a glorious model to my generals. What use have you made of these advantages? You bring me crippled, hungry, desperate soldiers! You bring me generals covered with shame, and blushing over their guilt. If I should deal with them as they deserved, I would give them over to a court-martial and they would be condemned."

"And still I am not conscious of any fault," said the prince. "I dare to say fate was against me, and that I am wholly innocent."

"And I repeat to you your conduct has been that of an ally of France, who wished destruction to the Prussians, and to close this hated war!"

"If that were so, I would be a traitor!" said the prince.

"And who will dare say that you are not?" cried the king. "Who will say that he who, while I was engaged in war with France, exchanged the most tender letters with the former French ambassador Valori, and complained to this Frenchman of the obstinacy of his brother, who is also his king? Who will say that this man is not a traitor? Was it not known to you, my brother, when you wrote to Valori, that the French had already invaded my Westphalian provinces? It was known to you—and yet you dared to write to a Frenchman that you were convinced of the decline of my kingdom. And yet you dared to bring charges against me, and to say: '*Ce seront mes enfants qui seront les victimes des fautes passées.*' Did you not know that it was the Marquise de Pompadour who gave occasion for this war? You knew it, and yet you commissioned Valori to entreat the marquise to have her portrait painted for you! Now, sir, I ask you, in all candor, if these are not the acts of a traitor?"

The prince made a passionate exclamation, and laid his hand upon his sword.

"You dare to dishonor me, sire!"

"I dare it! I dare to tell you the truth," said the king, solemnly. "Take your hand from your sword—the truth is an enemy that you cannot contend against with weapons, but with deeds, and your conduct testifies against you."

The prince breathed heavily, and turned deadly pale.

"The contest is over. Your majesty fights against me with weapons which I do not possess, and would not dare use, and against which I cannot defend myself. You open my private letters, and from the harmless confidences of friendship you make a traitor of me. To call me a traitor, is to degrade me. I am dishonored; and

with a dishonored culprit your majesty cannot contend. I will therefore withdraw. No one will see the wounds you have inflicted —which have pierced my heart; but, I tell you, my brother, I will die of these wounds."

"And in heaven, I suppose, you will accuse me as your murderer?" said the king, ironically.

"No! in heaven I will pray for my fatherland," said Prince Augustus William, mildly. He bowed respectfully, turned, and left the room.

Without stood the generals, maintaining a solemn silence. When they saw the prince appear at the door of the king's tent, so pale, so suffering, a prophetic warning filled every breast. It seemed to them that a dying man approached them, and with inexpressible sorrow held out his hand for a last farewell.

"It is passed! The battle is ended!"

At this moment the adjutant of the king left the tent, and approached the generals, who stood near the prince.

"His majesty commands you to see that the soldiers of the third army corps are kept, as far as it is possible, entirely separated from the rest of the army. You will immediately convey the order to the king's army, that all intercourse between them and the third army corps is forbidden, as this corps seems to have lost all courage and all honorable feeling." *

"The king's commands shall be obeyed," said the generals, coldly.

The prince was completely overcome by this last blow, and leaned for a moment upon the arm of the Duke of Wurtemberg; he soon recovered himself, and turning to General Schultz, he said:

"Go and bring me, from the king, the watchword of the third army corps."

General Schultz withdrew, but returned quickly from the king's tent, with a dark frown upon his face.

"Well," said the prince, "have you the watchword?"

"No, your royal highness! The king says, that for cowards and fugitives he has no watchword, and he commanded me to go to the devil."

A murmur of rage was heard amongst the generals. The prince let his glance wander from one to the other of these dark faces.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the tempest will soon be over, and the sun will shine again for you; I am the only cloud now round about you, and I will withdraw."

"What! will you desert us?" said the generals, sadly.

"Do I not belong to the third army corps?" said the prince, with a painful smile. "It may be that the king will command his sol-

* Kustrin, "Characteristics from the Life of Frederick the Great."

diers to have no intercourse with the commander of the third army corps, and you can understand that I prefer to anticipate him."

"Will your highness allow me to accompany you?" said the Duke of Bevern. "I also will not allow myself to be despised and railed at without any opportunity accorded me of explanation."

The prince shook his head.

"You must remain, general; the army cannot spare its brave leaders. I, however—I must go. I will be the peace-offering for you all. I am sure this will content my brother the king."

"Allow me, at least, to accompany your royal highness," said General Schmettau. "The king commanded me, through his adjutant, to withdraw, and never dare to present myself before his eyes again. I also must leave the army."

The prince gave him his hand.

"You are, then, a welcome companion. Let us ride on to Bautzen, where we can refresh ourselves, and then go on to Dresden."

"Will you really leave us?" said the Duke of Wurtemberg, sadly.

"Would you have me wait for still further degradation?" said the prince. "No, it is enough—more than I can bear.—My horse! General, let us mount."

The two horses were brought forward. The generals placed themselves in front, to take leave of their former commander-in-chief, with all military honor.

Prince Augustus rode slowly on. Everywhere he met sad faces and eyes filled with tears. Tears indeed were in his own eyes, but he would not weep—not now; there was time enough for tears. He could weep during the sad remainder of his life. He forced his voice to be firm, and, waving his sword to the generals, as a last greeting, he said:

"I hope no one of you will hold me for a coward. I am forced by the king to leave the army." He turned his horse, and, followed by Schmettau, with head erect, he moved slowly off.

"Now, by Heaven," cried Ziethen, "he shall not leave the camp in this contemptible way! I will give him a suitable guard. Let the king rage; I can stand it!" He nodded to an officer. "Listen, Von Wendt, take half a company for a guard, and follow immediately behind the prince, to Bautzen."

A few moments later, an officer sprang along the highway to Bautzen, accompanied by his hussars; they soon overtook the prince, who greeted them kindly.

"Schmettau," said he, "Death avoided me so long as I was on the battle-field, now I bear him along with me; and thus must it be, till the pale king of terrors carries me to another world." He turned his eyes away from the Prussian camp, and rode slowly to Bautzen.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LETTERS.

A FEW hours later a courier rode into the camp. He came from Bautzen, and had a letter from the Prince of Prussia to his royal brother. The king was still in his tent, busily engaged in looking over the army list. He took his brother's letter, and, opening it with evident anger, read:

"Your majesty's commands, and the incidents of our last meeting, have taught me that I have lost my honor and my reputation. As I have nothing to reproach myself with, this causes me much sorrow, but no humiliation. I am convinced that I was not actuated by obstinacy, and that I did not follow the advice of incompetent men. All the generals in the third army corps commanded by me, will testify to this. I consider it necessary to request your majesty to have my conduct investigated. Your majesty would thereby do me a kindness. I have, therefore, no right to count upon it. My health is much impaired since the war. I have withdrawn to Bautzen for its restoration, and have requested the Duke of Bevern to give you all the information relative to the army. In spite of my unhappiness, my daily prayer is, and shall be, that every undertaking of your majesty shall be crowned with glory.

"Your unhappy brother,

"AUGUSTUS WILLIAM."

The king read this letter several times; then taking up his pen, he wrote hastily:

"MY DEAR BROTHER: Your improper conduct has greatly disturbed my equanimity. Not my enemies, but your want of principle, has caused all these disasters. My generals are not to be excused. They have either given you bad advice, or have agreed too readily to your foolish plans. The one is as bad as the other. Your ears are accustomed to flattery, my brother. Daun did not flatter you, and you now see the consequences. But little hope remains. I shall commence the attack—if we do not conquer, we shall die together. I do not bewail the loss of your heart, but rather your utter incapacity and want of judgment. I tell you this plainly, for with one who has perhaps but a few days to live, there is no use of deception. I wish you more happiness than has fallen to my lot, and hope that your misfortunes and disappointments may teach you to act with more wisdom and judgment where matters of importance are concerned. Many of the painful events I now look forward to, I ascribe to you. You and your children will suffer from their re-

sults much more than myself. Be assured that I have always loved you, and will continue to do so until my death. Your brother,

"FREDERICK."

When the king had finished his letter, he read it over. "I cannot take back one word I have said," murmured he, softly. "Were he not my brother, he should be court-martialled. But history shall not have to relate more than one such occurrence of a Hohenzollern. Enough family dramas and tragedies have occurred in my reign to furnish scandalous material for future generations; I will not add to them. My brother can withdraw quietly from these scenes—he can pray while we fight—he can cultivate the peaceful arts while we are upon the battle-field, offering up bloody sacrifices to Mars. Perhaps we will succeed in gaining an honorable peace for Prussia, and then Augustus William may be a better king than I have been. Prussia still clings to me—she needs me."

He sealed the letter, then calling his valet, ordered him to send it off immediately. As he disappeared, the king's countenance became once more clouded and disturbed. "Life makes a man very poor," said he, softly; "the longer he lives, the more solitary he becomes. How rich I was when I began life—how rich when I mounted the throne! Possessing many friends, sisters, brothers, and many charming illusions. The world belonged to me then, with all its joy, all its glory. And now? Where are these friends? Lost to me, either by death or inconstancy! Where are my brothers, sisters? Their hearts have turned from me—their love has grown cold! Where are my joyous illusions? Scattered to the winds! Alas, I am now undeceived, and if the whole world seemed at one time to belong to me, that little spot of earth, paid for with blood and anguish, is no longer mine. Every illusion but one has been torn from my heart—the thirst for glory still remains. I have bid adieu to love, to happiness, but I still believe in fame, and must at least have one laurel-wreath upon my coffin. May death then strike me at his will—the sooner the better, before my heart has become perfectly hardened! And I feel that time is not far distant."

The curtain of his tent was at this moment drawn back, and his secretary, Le Catt, whose acquaintance he had made during his visit to Amsterdam, entered with several letters in his hand. The king advanced eagerly to meet him.

"Well, Le Catt," said he, "has the courier come from Berlin?"

"Yes, sire, he has come," said Le Catt, sighing, "but I fear he brings no good news."

"No good news? Has the enemy forced his way so far?"

"An enemy has, sire; but not the one your majesty is thinking of!"

"How know you what enemy I mean?" said the king, impatiently. "Is it the Russians, or the French?"

"None of your mortal enemies, sire; and the mourning which now reigns in Berlin and will soon reign throughout Prussia, is caused by no enemy of your majesty but by Providence."

The king looked at him earnestly for a moment. "I understand," said he. "Some one of my family has died; is it not so?"

"Yes, sire; your—"

"Be still!" said the king, sternly. "I do not yet wish to know—I have not the strength to bear it—wait a while."

Folding his hands upon his breast, he paced up and down his tent several times, laboring hard for breath. He stood still, and leaning against the window, said: "Now, Le Catt, I can endure any thing; speak—who is it?"

"Sire, it is her majesty."

"My wife?" interrupted the king.

"No, sire; her majesty—"

"My mother!" cried the king, in a heart-broken voice. "My mother!"

He stood thus for a while, with his hands before his face, his form bowed down and trembling like an oak swayed by a storm. Tears escaped through his hands and fell slowly to the ground—groans of agony were wrung from him.

Le Catt could stand it no longer; he approached the king and ventured to say a few consoling words.

"Do not seek to comfort me," said the king; "you do not know what inexpressible pain this loss has caused me."

"Yes, sire, I well know," said Le Catt, "for the queen-mother was the noblest, most gracious princess that ever lived. I can therefore understand your sorrow."

"No, you cannot," said the king, raising his pale, tearful countenance. "You carry your sorrow upon your lips—I upon my heart. The queen was the best of women, and my whole land may well mourn for her. It will not be forced grief, for every one who had the happiness to approach loved and admired her for her many virtues—for her great kindness. And I feel, I know, that sorrow for the ruin of Prussia has caused her death. She was too noble a princess, too tender a mother, to outlive Prussia's destruction and her son's misfortune."

"But your majesty knows that the queen was suffering from an incurable disease."

"It is true I know it," said the king, sinking slowly upon his camp-stool. "I feared that I might never see her again, and still this news comes totally unexpected."

"Your majesty will overcome this great grief as a philosopher, a hero."

"Ah, my friend," said the king, sadly, "philosophy is a solace in past and future sufferings, but is utterly powerless for present grief; I feel my heart and strength fail. For the last two years I have resembled a tottering wall. Family misfortune, secret pain, public sorrow, continual disappointment, these have been my nourishment. What is there wanting to make of me another Job? If I wish to survive these distressing circumstances, I must become a stoic. For I cannot bring the philosophy of Epicurus to bear upon my great sorrows. And still," added the king, the dejected look disappearing from his countenance, and giving place to one of energy and determination, "still, I will not be overcome. Were all the elements to combine against me, I will not fall beneath them."

"Ah!" cried Le Catt, "once more is my king the hero, who will not only overcome his grief, but also his enemies."

"God grant that you are a true prophet!" cried the king, earnestly. "This is a great era; the next few months will be decisive for Prussia: I will restore her or die beneath her ruins!"

"You will restore!" cried Le Catt, with enthusiasm.

"And when I have made Prussia great," said the king, relapsing into his former gloom, "my mother will not be here to rejoice with me. Each one of my home-returning soldiers will have some one—a mother, a sweetheart—to meet them with tears of joy, to greet them tenderly. I shall be alone."

"Your people will advance, gladly, to meet you; they will greet you with tears of joy."

"Ah, yes," cried the king, with a bitter smile, "they will advance to meet me joyfully; but, were I to die the same day, they would cry: '*Le roi est mort—vive le roi!*' and would greet my successor with equal delight. There is nothing personal in the love of a people to its sovereign; they love not in me the man, but the king. But my mother loved not the king the warrior; she loved her son with her whole heart, and God knows he had but that one heart to trust in. Leave me, Le Catt. Seek not to console me. Soon the king will gain the mastery. Now I am but the son, who wishes to be alone with the mother. Go." Fearing he had wounded Le Catt, he pressed his hand tenderly.

Le Catt raised it to his lips and covered it with kisses and tears. The king withdrew it gently, and signed to him to leave the room.

Now he was alone—alone with his pain, with his grief—alone with his mother. And, truly, during this hour he was but the loving son; his every thought was of his mother; he conversed with her, he wept over her; but, as his sorrow became more subdued, he

took his flute from the table, the one constant companion of his life. As the soft, sweet tones were wafted through the tent, he seemed to hear his mother whispering words of love to him, to feel her hallowed kiss upon his brow. And now he was king once more. As he heard without the sound of trumpets, the beating of drums, the loud shouts and hurrahs of his soldiers, a new fire burned in his eyes, he laid his flute aside, and listened for a time to the joyous shouts; then raising his right hand, he said: "Farewell, mother; you died out of despair for my defeat at Collin, but I swear to you I will revenge your death and my defeat tenfold upon my enemies when I stand before them again in battle array. Hear me, spirit of my mother, and give to your son your blessing!"

CHAPTER X.

IN THE CASTLE AT DRESDEN.

THE Queen Maria Josephine of Poland, Princess elect of Saxony, paced her room violently; and with deep emotion and painful anxiety she listened to every noise which interrupted the stillness that surrounded her.

"If he should be discovered," she murmured softly, "should this letter be found, all is betrayed, and I am lost."

She shuddered, and even the paint could not conceal her sudden pallor. She soon raised herself proudly erect, and her eyes resumed their usual calm expression.

"Bah! lost," she said, shrugging her shoulders, "who will dare to seize a queen and condemn her for fighting for her honor and her country? Only the insolent and arrogant Margrave of Brandenburg could have the temerity to insult a queen and a woman in my person, and he, thank God, is crushed and will never be able to rally. But where is Schönberg," she said, uneasily; "if he does not come to-day, all is lost—all!"

Loud voices in the antechamber interrupted her; she listened in breathless expectation. "It is he," she murmured, "it is Schönberg; the officer on guard forbids his entrance. What insults I endure! I am treated as a prisoner in my own castle; I am even denied the right of seeing my own servants."

She ceased, and listened again; the voices became louder and more violent. "He is, apparently, speaking so loudly to attract my attention," she said; "I will go to his relief." She crossed the chamber hastily, and opened the door leading into the anteroom.

"What means this noise?" she said, angrily; "how dare you be guilty of such unseemly conduct?"

Silence followed this question. The two gentlemen, who had just exchanged such angry words, were dumb, approached the queen, and bowed profoundly.

"I beg your majesty's forgiveness," said the Prussian officer, "my commander ordered me this morning to admit no one until he had seen your highness himself."

"I wished to announce to your majesty," said Schönberg, "that I had returned from my estate, and desired the favor of being again received into your service; this gentleman refused to allow me to enter."

The queen turned upon the officer with an expression of contempt. "Am I a prisoner, sir, allowed to see no one but my jailer?"

"Your majesty favors me with a question I am unable to answer," said the officer; "I am a soldier; and must obey the command of those above me. I know not whether your majesty is a prisoner."

The queen reddened; she felt that, in the excitement of passion, she had forgotten her rank and dignity.

"It is true," she said, "it is not for you to answer this question. I must demand a reply from your king. You are but a machine, moved by foreign power. I think you will not dare to keep my servants from me;" and, without allowing the confused officer time to answer, she turned to the chamberlain, Baron von Schönberg. "I am delighted to receive you again: you shall resume your service immediately, as you desire it; follow me to my room, I have an important letter to dictate to you."

She stepped over the sill of the door, and gave the chamberlain a sign to follow her; as he approached the door, however, the officer stepped before him.

"Forgive me," he said, in a pleading tone; "I have strict orders to admit only those who usually surround the queen; do you understand, sir, to admit no one to her majesty this morning? I can make no exceptions."

"I belong to those who usually surround her majesty," said the chamberlain; "I have had an eight days' leave of absence; that cannot make an exception against me."

"Baron von Schönberg, did I not order you to resume your service, and to follow me?" said the queen; "why do you not enter?"

"Your majesty sees that I am prevented."

"Mercy, your highness, mercy," pleaded the officer, "I know I am seemingly wanting in reverence toward the holy person of the queen, but I cannot act otherwise."

Maria Josephine looked proud and commanding; her eyes flashed angrily, and, with a loud voice, she exclaimed:

"I command you to allow my servant to enter! do you hear? command it as a sovereign!"

The officer stepped back.

"Go in, sir, I have not the courage to withstand this command."

For a moment the queen's pale face crimsoned with joy, but she suppressed her emotion immediately and motioned the chamberlain, with proud dignity, to follow.

Schönberg passed the officer, and entered the room.

"At last," sighed Maria Josephine, as the door closed behind him —"at last this torture is at an end, and I breathe again. Speak, baron—your news!" Exhausted, she fell upon the sofa, and gazed breathlessly at the chamberlain.

"Before speaking, with your majesty's permission, I will see if we are entirely alone—if no one is listening."

He stepped softly around the room, and searched behind the curtains and furniture; then went to the door, and looked through the key-hole, to see if any one was without. He saw the officer sitting motionless, at the other end of the anteroom. Satisfied with this, he was about to open the other door, but the queen called him back.

"That is unnecessary; no one can be concealed there. Now let me hear quickly what you have to say."

"I have many things to tell you," said the chamberlain, triumphantly. "All our undertakings have been most successful. We may hope they will be crowned with the most desirable results."

"Praise to God and the holy saints!" murmured the queen. "Speak, speak! tell me all!"

"After I left your majesty, eight days ago, I went first to my estate, which, as your highness knows, lies near Bautzen, and in the immediate neighborhood of the King of Prussia's camp. Disguised as a peasant, with my little flock of sheep, I entered the Prussian camp unchallenged. I wish your majesty could have had the satisfaction of seeing what I saw. Your royal heart would have been gladdened at the sight of those starved, exhausted, and desperate troops which Prince Augustus William led back from Zittau to his august brother, the great Frederick. You would have acknowledged with delight that such discouraged, demoralized troops could no longer withstand the splendid and victorious army of the confederates. The battle of Collin dug their graves, and the pass of Gabel made their coffins."

"And the Saxon dragoons decided the battle of Collin?" said the queen, with sparkling eyes. "Go on! tell me more. Did you speak with the king's chamberlain, Anderson?"

"Yes, your majesty, and I found him faithful. I gave him the diamond ring which your majesty was so gracious as to send him. He was delighted with this costly present, and swore he would let no opportunity pass of serving you. I told him how he might safely write to me. He will inform us of all that takes place in the Prussian camp, and of all the important movements of the king."

"You are convinced of his integrity?" said the queen.

"Entirely convinced; he loves money, and serves us for his own interests. He will be ready for any act, if we balance it with gold."

The eyes of the queen sparkled, and her countenance had a threatening and passionate expression; her Spanish blood was moved, and rushed in fever streams to her heart.

"Is he ready for any act?" she repeated. "Perhaps we could make a decisive trial of his willingness; but of that, later—continue."

"I learned from Anderson, that King Frederick intends to force the confederates to another battle. When I left the camp, the king had distributed rations to his army, and was to leave the next morning, to encounter Daun and Radasdy."

The queen laughed mockingly.

"He then thirsts for a second Collin. As his grave is open and his coffin made, he wishes to get the Austrian grave-diggers to bury him. Well, we will not deny him this last service of love."

"After leaving the Prussian camp," continued the chamberlain, "I threw off my disguise, and hastened with post-horses to where Daun and Radasdy were quartered."

"And you saw them?"

"I saw them; I was fortunate enough to be able to deliver your majesty's letters to General Radasdy, and I can now give your highness the general's answer, and some other important papers." He drew a small *étui* from his bosom, out of which he took a penknife; then taking his hat, ripped off the gold galloon, cut the rim, and drew a paper from between the fur and the inner lining, which he handed to the queen, with a profound bow.

While the queen was occupied breaking the seal and reading the letter, the chamberlain was busily engaged in restoring his hat to its former proportions. The queen's pale face brightened more and more as she read; with joy and triumph she glanced from the paper at the chamberlain, and said, with a brilliant smile:

"You are really a messenger of peace; a time will come when I can better reward your faithful services than by words. I beg you to open that door, and call Father Guarini."

The chamberlain obeyed her command, and Father Guarini entered. He greeted Schönberg with a gracious nod, then fixed his

dark and piercing eyes upon the queen, who arose humbly to receive him.

"I hope, venerable father, that you have heard the news, brought by our faithful baron?" said the queen, in a soft voice.

"I have heard!" replied the Jesuit father, solemnly; "I have heard that God has delivered these heretics into our hands. We are the chosen people to free the world of these blasphemous adversaries of the Church."

"What is your meaning?" asked the queen, with apparent surprise.

Father Guarini looked at her significantly; a cruel smile played upon his thin, colorless lips.

"My daughter, we understand each other fully," said he, in a soft, low voice; "soul speaks to soul in such a crisis as this. When the baron handed you this letter, when he told you that the chamberlain of the King of Prussia was faithful to our holy cause, ready for any act you might approve, a door separated us; I could not look upon your countenance, and yet, my daughter, I read the secret thoughts of your heart. I saw your eyes sparkle, your lips smile, and understood your holy purpose."

The queen trembled, and stepped shudderingly back.

"Holy father," she murmured, "have compassion with a sinful thought, which I suppressed quickly, and which I will never listen to again."

"Why do you call it a sinful thought?" said the priest, with a diabolical smile. "All weapons are blessed and made holy by God, when employed against heretics. The poison of the hemlock and the opium-plant is part of God's holy creation. He made them as weapons for the just against the unjust, and, when used for pious purposes, they are sanctified means of grace. Be not ashamed of your great thought, my daughter; if Anderson is faithful, as the chamberlain asserts, with God's help we will soon be able to bring this war to a close, and crush this unbelieving horde."

"Still, I pray you still, my father," murmured the queen; "my whole soul shudders at this frightful suggestion; let us not speak of this again, let us forget it."

"Let us not speak of it, but let us not forget it," murmured the priest, with a malicious smile.

The queen said hastily: "Father, such fearful weapons are not necessary for the destruction of our enemies. Frederick of Prussia can never rally—he stands alone, has not a single ally in Germany. This is the important news brought me by the baron, which I now communicate to you. We have succeeded in a great enterprise; a mighty work has been completed by us and our allies in the cloister

of Zeven. This has been achieved by our ambassador, the pious Duke of Lynar, and we will triumph in a glittering and bloodless victory. Every German prince who has heretofore stood by the traitor and heretic, Frederick of Prussia, has, at the command and menace of the emperor, fallen off from him, and dare no longer lend him help or influence. The men of Hesse, of Brunswick, of Gotha, who were allied to Prussia, and who were just from fighting with the Hanoverians against Soubise and Richelieu, have laid down their arms and returned home. They have solemnly bound themselves in the convention of the cloister of Zeven never again to bear arms for the heretical and rebellious King of Prussia, who is excommunicated by the German emperor and the holy Pope at Rome. The contest between the Hanoverians and our French ally is ended, and a cessation of hostilities determined upon. Unconditional peace is indeed indefinitely declared. The Hanoverians remain inactive on the Elbe; the Duke of Cumberland, leader of the English troops, has returned to London,* and his adversary, the Duke de Richelieu, to Paris. The French troops now in Germany, under the command of the Prince Soubise, have no other enemy to attack than Frederick, the natural enemy of us all. The King of Prussia, who stands alone, has no other ally."

"No ally but himself," interrupted a loud, powerful voice.

The queen turned and saw General von Fink, the Prussian commander of Dresden. He had opened the door noiselessly, and had heard the queen's last words.

Maria Josephine paled with anger, and stepping forward to meet him, with head erect, she looked as if she would trample him under foot.

"Sir," she said, scarcely able to control her passion, and at the same time trembling with terror, "who gave you permission to enter this room?"

"My sovereign, the King of Prussia," said the general, placing himself before her with stiff military courtesy. "I come not from idle curiosity, but on important business, and your majesty must pardon me if you find it disagreeable."

He made a sign toward the door, and immediately an officer and four soldiers appeared at the threshold. The commander pointed to the chamberlain, Von Schönberg, who, pale and trembling, endeavored to conceal himself behind the wide dress of the queen.

*When the Duke of Cumberland returned to London, after the convention at the cloister of Zeven, his father, whose favorite he had been up to this time, received him with great coldness, and said before all his ministers: "Here is my son who has ruined me and disgraced himself." The duke had to resign all his honors, and died a few years later, despised by the whole nation.

"Arrest that man, and take him off!" said the general.

Schönberg uttered a cry of alarm, and disappeared behind the satin robe of the queen.

"What, sir! you dare to force yourself into my room, and to arrest my servant?" cried the queen, angrily.

The general shrugged his shoulders.

"We are living in perilous times, and every man must defend himself from his enemies. 'Tis true your chamberlain sold some good sheep to our army, but it appears to have been a fraudulent transaction; for this reason, I arrest him, and send him to Berlin for trial. There it will be difficult for him to carry on his correspondence with the traitorous chamberlain of the king."

The general ceased speaking, and gazing at the pale, disturbed group before him, enjoyed their horror and consternation for a moment.

The queen was greatly embarrassed, and pressed her lips firmly together to suppress a cry of terror. By her side stood Father Guarini, whose face had assumed a livid pallor, and whose dark eyes were fixed in bitter hatred upon the general. Behind the queen the terrified face of the chamberlain was seen, his insignificant figure being entirely concealed by the queen's robes.

"Baron von Schönberg," said General Fink, "I order you to come forward and to submit to your arrest. Out of respect to her majesty the queen, you will be quiet. I should be unfortunately forced to act with violence if you do not yield without a struggle."

The chamberlain advanced with dignity, bowing profoundly to the queen. He said, in a trembling voice:

"I must beg your majesty graciously to dismiss me from your service. I must obey this gentlemen, who, as it appears, is master in the castle."

The queen was for a moment speechless; her voice was lost, and her eyes were filled with tears. She said, after a long pause:

"Will you rob me of my faithful servant? You dragged Baroness Brühl and Countess Ogliva to Warsaw, and now you will deprive me of the services of this tried and constant friend."

"I obey the commands of my king," said the general, "and I believe your majesty must see the justice of this arrest. Had the baron been captured in camp, he would have been shot at once as a spy. I arrest him here and send him to Berlin, that he may defend himself against the charge of being a traitor."

The queen breathed heavily, she had regained her composure; turning to the chamberlain she said, in a voice softer and kinder than had ever been heard from her before:

"Go, my friend, and when your loyalty is called treason by our

enemies, do not forget that your queen is thinking of you with gratitude, and praying for you to our heavenly Father."

She offered the chamberlain her small, white hand; he sank upon his knees, and covered it with his tears and kisses.

"Go, my son," said Father Guarini, laying his hand upon Schönberg's head—"go; the Lord has chosen you as a blessed martyr for our just and holy cause. The Lord will be with you, and the holy mother Church will pray for you."

"I go, my father—may it be granted me to die for my queen!"

Turning to the general, he delivered up his sword rather tragically, and declared himself ready to depart.

The commandant signed to the officer.

"Conduct this gentleman to the carriage, and send him with a sufficient guard to Berlin."

CHAPTER XI

THE TE DEUM.

THE queen looked sadly after the chamberlain; when he had disappeared, she turned to the general.

"I now hope," said she, "that you have fulfilled your orders, and that I will be permitted to have my apartments to myself."

"I beg your majesty's pardon," said the general, bowing respectfully, "but as yet I have fulfilled but the smallest portion of my master's commands."

"How? is there still some one here whom you wish to arrest?" said the queen.

"No, noble lady, but some one I wish to warn!"

"You are, without doubt, speaking of me, general?" said the priest, quietly.

"Yes, sir, of you. I wish to warn you not to occupy your pious thoughts with that very worldly thing called politics, and to request you to instruct the members of your Church in religion, in Christian love and kindness, and not to lure them to murder and treachery."

The priest shrugged his shoulders; a contemptuous smile played about his small, thin lips.

"The words 'religion and Christian love' sound strangely in the mouth of a Prussian warrior. I decline receiving any advice from you. I have no fear of you or of your superiors! I am subject only to God and the Pope!"

"That may be in your own country, but not in the King of Prussia's," answered General Fink, quietly. "There every one is subject to the law; no title, no clerical gown protects the criminal. Two days ago, a spy was discovered in the Prussian camp, who was a priest; he was hung like any other spy, although at the last moment, hoping to save his life, he exclaimed that he was a friend of Father Guarini, the court confessor. His majesty the King of Prussia commissioned me to impart to you the death of your friend."

"From my heart I thank you for so doing," said the priest. "I shall have masses read for my friend, of whom you have made a martyr."

The queen gazed at him with sparkling eyes. "Oh, my father," said she, "I thank you for your noble example; it shall enable me, in spite of threats and insults, not to deny the holy cause and the friends who have suffered for it. And now, general, I hope your commissions are fulfilled, and that you will take your leave."

"I hope your majesty will believe that I would not venture to remain, were I not compelled by the commands of my king. I have to request your majesty to listen while I read aloud some letters, some historical documents, which may possibly interest your highness."

"You can read," said the queen. "As my ears do not belong to the King of Prussia, it lies with me to listen or not, as I please." She sank gently upon the divan, signing to the priest to remain beside her.

"I flatter myself that I will have your majesty's attention," said the general, withdrawing to the nearest window and opening a package of letters. "The first relates to an extremely amusing occurrence, which my master, knowing that France was your ally, imagined would interest you. Your highness is aware that Prince Soubise is a brave soldier. This is Madame Pompadour's opinion; it must, therefore, be true. About a week ago this brave prince determined to rest for a while from his heroic deeds, and gave the same privilege to a large portion of his army. The general, accompanied by his staff and eight thousand soldiers, then entered that lovely little spot, called Gotha, to visit the talented and princely duke and duchess. He and his staff were received by them with great honor; magnificent preparations were forthwith made for a splendid dinner to welcome the prince who, happily, was not only fond of laurels,. but also of good eating. Dinner was served, the French generals had finished their toilets, Prince Soubise had given the duchess his arm to lead her to her seat, when a loud cry of terror was heard from without. 'The Prussians are at the gates!' Prince Soubise dropped the arm of the duchess; through the Paris rouge,

so artistically put on, the paleness, which now covered his face, could not be seen. The doors leading to the dining-saloon were thrown open, making visible the sparkling glass, the smoking dishes, the rare service of gold and silver; the generals of the prince now hastened forward and confirmed the wild rumor. Yes; and rumor, for once, was true. General Seidlitz was there with fifteen hundred brave cavalrymen. The French are noted for their politeness, and it did not fail them upon this occasion. Without a word, Prince Soubise and his eight thousand men made room for General Seidlitz and his fifteen hundred, and hastened from the ducal palace. Before the rich dishes had time to cool, General Seidlitz and his staff were seated at the table, enjoying the magnificent dinner prepared for the French generals. Many prisoners, many spoils were taken afterward. Not that Pince Soubise had not taken all his soldiers with him, but there was another small army by which the French troops are always accompanied. These, the lackeys, valets, cooks, hair-dressers, ballet-dancers, actresses, priests, etc., etc., were not able to run as fast as the French soldiers. The spoils consisted in the equipages of the prince and his staff, in which were boxes and chests containing precious things, their large chests full of delightful perfumes and hair-oils, trunks full of wigs, dressing-gowns, and parasols. There were several learned parrots who had a leaning to politics, and who exclaimed continually: '*Vive les Français! A bas les Prussiens!*' But the kind-hearted General Seidlitz did not wish to deprive the French army of the necessities of life; he therefore sent them their valets, cooks, hair-dressers, actresses, priests, etc. The perfumes and hair-oils he gave to his own soldiers."

"I trust you have finished," said the queen, playing listlessly with her fan.

"Ah, your majesty has then honored me by listening?" said General Fink, smiling.

The queen preserved a dignified silence.

The general continued reading: "After long deliberation, Prince Soubise concluded he had carried his politeness too far in vacating the ducal palace to the Prussians; he determined, therefore, to go after his perfumes, hair-oils, dressing-gowns, wigs, etc., etc., and drive the Prussians from Gotha. Prince von Hildburghäusen joined him with his troops. Thus the French advanced to Gotha, secure and confident of success. But to their terror they found before the city not two Prussian regiments, as they had expected, but what seemed to them the entire Prussian army arranged in line of battle, and in such large numbers that for miles around the hills were covered with them. This was so unexpected to the French generals

that they determined to retreat for a while, until they had recovered from their surprise. They withdrew, leaving the field to the Prussians. Had they not withdrawn so hastily, they would soon have seen that the Prussian army consisted only of fifteen hundred, which, thanks to General Seidlitz's strategy, presented a very imposing view. Thus Seidlitz gained the day without firing a shot—not by the troops who were present, but by those who were supposed to be present."

"I have had enough of this," said the queen, rising. "I am weary of listening to your witty stories. The King of Prussia may triumph for a while—he may jest over his lost battles—but the hour of his misfortune is at hand. God, who is just—who thrusts the arrogant and haughty to the ground—will also punish him, and give victory to the just cause. The battle of Collin was for Frederick the Second the first proof of God's anger, and now with increasing strength His mighty arm will be raised against him."

"I am aware that these are your majesty's sentiments," said the general, smiling; "and my master is as well informed. I think they were stated in almost the same words in letters which your majesty wrote to the Austrian general, Nadasky."

The queen fell back upon her seat trembling, and a deep red suffused her countenance. Even Father Guarini showed by the quivering of his lip and his sudden paleness, that the conversation was now taking an agitating turn.

"What do you know of my letters to Nadasky?" said the queen, breathlessly. "Who says I have written to him?"

"Your own hand, gracious queen," answered the general. "While the king, my noble sovereign, was in Bernstadt, he was told that General Nadasky was at Ostriz, and sent General von Werner after him. Nadasky fled, but his baggage was captured, and amongst his letters this one from your majesty was discovered." And he held up the letter in question before the queen, to convince her of its authenticity.

Maria Josephine endeavored to tear it from him, but the general was too quick for her.

"By command of my master, this letter is to be returned to you, but upon one condition."

"Well, what is it?" said the queen, faintly.

"I am to read to your majesty a few sentences from it, selected by the King of Prussia himself."

"And all my letters shall then be returned to me?"

"All, your majesty."

"You can read," said the queen, seating herself.

General Fink approached the window by which he had been

standing before, and looked out for a few moments. Some one, perhaps, had passed with whom he was acquainted, for he bowed several times and raised his hand as if he were beckoning. After this intermission, at which the queen and her confessor had looked in amazement, he opened the letter and commenced to read.

It was a demand from Queen Maria Josephine to the Austrian general to do all in his power to ruin their common enemy. "If we are energetic," continued the general, reading in a loud voice, "it will soon be done. At the battle of Collin, God laid his mark upon Frederick; Prussia will have no more victories; her arrogant ruler has sung his last *Te Deum.*"

At this moment the bells of the nearest church commenced their solemn chimes, and from the fort behind the castle the thunder of cannon was heard. The queen rose from her seat and rushed to the window.

"What is the meaning of this?" said she, breathlessly. "Why these bells? Why this cannon? What—"

The renewed thunder of cannon drowned her words. She threw open the window, and now all the church bells were joined in one harmonious chant. From beneath the queen's windows there arose a slow, solemn hymn, and as if borne aloft by invisible spirits, the words "*Te Deum laudamus*" were heard by the queen. Her eyes sparkled. "For whom is this *Te Deum?*" said she, breathlessly.

"It is for my master," said General Fink, solemnly—"for the King of Prussia, who at Rossbach, with twenty thousand men, has gained a victory over sixty thousand French soldiers."

A cry of rage, and Maria Josephine fell fainting to the floor.

CHAPTER XII.

CAMP SCENE.

It was a cold winter day, and in the Prussian camp at Newmark every one was occupied making fires.

"Let us get a great deal of wood," said a sprightly-looking, slender young soldier, to his comrades; "our limbs must not be stiff to-day. I think to-morrow all will go off bravely, and we will prepare a strong soup for the Austrians."

"And instead of the noodles, we will send them cannon-balls," said a comrade, standing near him. "But see here, brother, as we are not going to fight this evening, I think we shoulld make use of the time and cook a soup for ourselves. When we have wood enough for a good fire, we will set the kettle over it, and the best of pastimes

will be ready. Shall we do it, comrades? Every man a groschen, and Charles Henry Buschman to cook the noodles."

"Yes, Buschman must cook the noodles; no one understands it so well as he. Charles Henry Buschman! Where hides the fellow? He is generally sticking to Fritz Kober, and they are chatting together as if they were lovers. Buschman! Charles Henry Buschman! Where are you?"

"Here I am!" cried a bright, fresh voice, and a slender youth, belonging to Prince Henry's regiment, stepped forward and joined them. "Who calls me?—what do you want?"

"We want you to cook noodles for us, Buschman; every man pays a groschen, and eats to his heart's content. You shall have them for nothing, because you prepare them."

"I will have nothing that I don't pay for," said Charles Henry, proudly; "I can pay as well as the rest of you, and perhaps I have more money than all of you; for while you are drinking, smoking, and playing, I put my groschens aside for a rainy day."

"Yes, that is true; Buschman is the most orderly, the most industrious of us all," said Fritz Kober, as he nodded lovingly to his young friend. "He does not drink, or smoke, or play; and, I can tell you, he sews like a woman. He mended a shirt for me today. A ball had passed through it at Rossbach, making a hole in the left sleeve. I tell you, the shirt looks as if a clever woman had mended it."

"Well, it is a pity he isn't one," said one of the soldiers, with a merry laugh; "perhaps you have a sister at home, Henry, whom you could give to Kober."

"No, comrade," said Charles Henry, sadly; "I have neither father, mother, sister, nor brother. I am alone in the world, and have no other friend but my comrade, Fritz Kober. Will you not give him to me, comrades? Will you tease him because he is the friend of a poor, young fellow, against whom you have nothing to say except that he is just seventeen years old, and has no beard, and his voice a little thin, not able to make as much noise as yourself? Promise me that you will not laugh at Fritz again because he is kind to, and loves a poor, forsaken boy. If you tease him, he will become desperate and run off from me, and then, when I fall in battle, he will not close my eyes as he has promised to do."

"I will never run away from you, darling brother," said Fritz Kober. "We two shall stay together in camp and in battle. You have won me with your soft black eyes; they remind me of those of my good, faithful Phylax."

"Well, well, Fritz shall do as he pleases," said one of the boys; "but enough with our chatting, let us seek the wood for our fire."

"Wood, wood, let us seek wood," cried all, gayly, and the happy troop separated on all sides. Only Charles Henry remained to prepare the fire. With busy haste he took the kettle, which the soldiers had dragged near, ran to the neighboring market and bought a groschen worth of lard to make the noodles savory, then hastened back to cut the bacon and mix it with the noodles. Some of the soldiers returned empty-handed—no wood was to be found; the soldiers, who had searched before them, had taken it all.

"It would be horrible not to have noodles this evening," said Fritz Kober, furiously. "Who knows but they may be the last we shall eat in this world? The balls may take our heads off to-morrow, and we never could eat Charles Henry's noodles again."

"What you can do to-day never put off until to-morrow," cried one of the soldiers. "We must eat noodles to-day, and we must have wood, even if we have to steal it from the devil's kitchen." And, as he turned around, his eye fell upon a little hut which stood on the other side of the camp. "Boys," he cried, gleefully, "do you see that hut?"

"Certainly; that hut is the king's quarters."

"I am willing the king should occupy the hut; but it is covered with wood, and he does not need that. Come, boys, we will have wood to cook our noodles."

With a hurrah they started forward to the old forsaken shepherd's hut in which the king had taken refuge. They climbed the rook as nimbly as cats, and now the old boards cracked and groaned and flew in every direction, and were received with shouts of joy by the surrounding soldiers. Suddenly a guard officer stepped from the hut, and saw with horror its destruction; he ordered the soldiers to lay the boards as they had found them, and to go off at once. The soldiers mocked at him, and continued at their work quietly.

"We are going to eat noodles," they said, "common noodles, of meal and lard, that we may have the courage to swallow iron noodles to-morrow. To cook noodles, we need wood. We find it here, and we shall take it."

"What!" cried the officer, "I forbid it, and you refuse to obey?—Sentinels, forward!"

The four guards, who, until now, had walked quietly to and fro before the hut, placed themselves at the door and shouldered arms.

"Fire at the first one who dares to touch another piece of wood," commanded the officer. But the wanton soldiers paid no attention to this order; they regarded it as an empty threat.

"Fire," cried one, laughing, "fire is just what we want—without fire, no noodles; and to make fire we must have wood."

"Whew! I have a big splinter in my finger," cried another sol-

dier, who was on the roof, and had just broken off a plank; "I must draw it out and put it back, mustn't I, lieutenant?"

At this question the gay group broke into a loud laugh; but it was interrupted by the angry words of the officer.

Suddenly a mild voice asked: "What is the matter?" At the first sound of this voice the soldiers seemed dismayed; they stopped their work, and their merry faces became earnest and thoughtful. Stiff and motionless they remained on the roof awaiting their punishment; they knew that voice only too well, they had heard it in the thunder of battle. The king repeated his question. The officer approached him.

"Sire, these dragoons are tearing the roof from your majesty's quarters, all my threats are useless; therefore I ordered the sentinels forward."

"What do you want with the sentinels?" asked the king.

"To fire amongst them, if they do not desist."

"Have you tried kindness?" said the king, sternly; "do you think, on the day before a battle, I have soldiers to spare, and you may shoot them down because of a piece of wood?"

The officer murmured a few confused words; but the king paid no attention to him; he looked up at the soldiers sitting stiff and motionless upon the roof.

"Listen, dragoons," said the king; "if you take off my roof, the snow will fall in my bed to-night, and you do not wish that, do you?"

"No, we do not wish it, sire," said Fritz Kober, ashamed, slipping softly from the roof; the others followed his example, and prepared to be off, giving melancholy glances at the wood lying on the ground. The king looked thoughtfully after them, and murmured, softly, "Poor fellows, I have deprived them of a pleasure.—Halloo, dragoons," he cried aloud, "listen!"

The soldiers looked back, frightened and trembling.

"Tell me," said the king, "what use were you going to make of the wood?"

"Cook noodles, sire," said Fritz Kober; "Henry Buschman promised to cook noodles for us, and the bacon is already cut; but we have no wood."

"Well, if the bacon is cut," said the king, smiling, "and if Henry Buschman has promised to make the noodles, he must certainly keep his word; take the wood away with you."

"Hurrah! long life to our king and to our good Fritz Kober," cried the soldiers, and, collecting the wood, they hastened away.

The king stepped back, silently, into the small, low room of the hut. Alone, there once more the smile disappeared, and his counte-

nance became sad and anxious. He confessed to himself what he had never admitted to friend or confidant, that it was a daring and most dangerous undertaking to meet the Austrian army of seventy thousand with his thirty-three thousand men.

"And should I fail," said the king, thoughtfully, "and lead these brave troops to their death without benefit to my country—should they die an unknown death—should we be conquered, instead of conquering! Oh, the fortune of battles lies in the hands of Providence; the wisest disposition of troops, the most acute calculations are brought to naught by seeming accident. Should I expose my army to the fearful odds, should I hazard so many lives to gratify my ambition and my pride? My generals say it will be wiser not to attack, but to wait and be attacked. Oh, Winterfeldt, Winterfeldt, were you but here, you would not advise this, not you! Why have you been taken from me, my friend? Why have you left me alone among my enemies? I can find, perhaps, resources against my enemies, but I will never find another Winterfeldt." *

The king leaned his head upon his breast, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"How solitary, how joyless life is! how rich I was once in friends, how poor I am now! and who knows how much poorer I may be to-morrow at this hour—who knows if I shall have a place to lay my head?—I may be a fugitive, without home or country. Verily, I have the destiny of Mithridates—I want only two sons and a Monima. Well," continued he, with a soft smile, "it is still something to stand alone—misfortunes only strike home. But do I stand alone? have I not an entire people looking to me and expecting me to do my duty? Have I not brave soldiers, who call me father, looking death courageously in the face and hazarding their lives for me? No, I am not alone—and if Mithridates had two sons, I have thirty-three thousand. I will go and bid them good-evening. I think it will refresh my sad heart to hear their cheerful greetings."

The king threw on his mantle and left his quarters, to make, as he was often accustomed to do, a tour through the camp. Only the officer on guard followed him, at a short distance.

It was now dark, and fires, which were lighted everywhere, gave a little protection against the biting cold. It was a beautiful sight —the wide plain, with its numberless, blazing, flickering fires, surrounded by groups of cheerful soldiers, their fresh faces glowing with the light of the flames. In the distance the moon rose grand and full, illuminating the scene with its silver rays, and blending its pale shimmer with the ruddy flames.

The king walked briskly through the camp, and, when recog-

* The king's own words.—Retzow, vol. i., p. 220.

nized, the soldiers greeted him with shouts and loving words. As he approached a large fire, over which hung a big kettle, the contents of which filled the air with savory odors, he heard a brisk voice say:

"Now, comrades, come and eat, the noodles are done!"

"Hurrah! here we are," cried the boys, who were standing not far off, chatting merrily. They sprang forward joyfully, to eat the longed-for noodles.

The king, recognizing the soldiers who had uncovered his roof, drew near to the fire.

"Shall I also come and eat with you?" he said, good-humoredly.

The soldiers looked up from the tin plates, in which the noodles were swimming.

"Yes, sire," said Fritz Kober, jumping up and approaching the king; "yes, you shall eat with us; here is my spoon and knife, and if you reject it, and are only mocking us, I shall be very angry indeed."

The king laughed, and turning to the officer who had followed him, said as if to excuse himself:

"I must really eat, or I shall make the man furious.—Give me your spoon; but listen, I can tell you, if the noodles are not good, *I* shall be angry." He took the plate and began to eat.

The soldiers all stopped, and looked eagerly at the king. When he had swallowed the first bite, Fritz Kober could no longer restrain his curiosity.

"Well, sire," he said, triumphantly, "what do you say to it? Can't Buschman prepare better noodles than your cleverest cook?"

"Verily," said the king, smiling, "he never cooked such noodles for me, and I must say they are good; but, now I have had enough, and I am much obliged to you."

He wished to return his plate to Fritz Kober, but Fritz shook his head violently.

"See here, your majesty, no one gets off from us with just a 'thank you,' and you, least of all, sire; every one must pay his part."

"Well," said the king, "how much is my share?"

"It cost each of us three groschen; the king may pay what he pleases."

"Will you credit me, dragoon?" said the king, who searched his pockets in vain for money.

"Oh! yes, your majesty, I will credit you, but only until to-morrow morning, early; for, if a cannon-ball took my head off, I could not dun your majesty, and you would be my debtor to all eternity."

"It would then be better to settle our accounts to-day," said the king; and nodding to the soldiers, he left them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WATCH-FIRE.

THE officer who had accompanied the king, returned in an hour to the watch-fire of the dragoons, and handed five gold pieces to Fritz Kober, which had been sent by the king to pay for his portion of the noodles; then, without giving the surprised soldier time to thank him, he withdrew.

Fritz looked long and thoughtfully at the gold pieces, which, in the light of the flickering fire, shone beautifully in his hand.

"It is very well—very well that the king kept his word, and paid me punctually to-night," said he to Chares Henry Buschman, who sat near, and with his elbow resting on his knee, watched his friend closely.

"And why so, Fritz?" said Charles.

"I will tell you, Charles Henry. If I fall to-morrow, I will have something in my pocket that you will inherit from me. I declare to you, no one but you alone shall be my heir; all that I have belongs to you. Thunder and lightning! I am rich! it is better I should make my testament; I don't know what may happen to me to-morrow. I have neither pen nor paper; well, I will make it verbally! I will wake some of my comrades, and they shall witness my last will and testament." He reached over to the sleeping soldiers, who lay near him on the ground, but Charles held him back.

"Let them sleep, friend," said he, pleadingly; "it is not necessary you should have witnesses. God, and the moon, and a thousand stars hear what we say to each other; and why speak of your will and your fortune, friend? Do you think I would care for that miserable gold, if you were no longer by my side? Do you think I would use it for any other purpose than to buy your tombstone, and write on it in golden letters?"

"What? a tomsbtone!" said Fritz Kober, with an astonished look; "and why would you place a tombstone over a poor, simple, unknown fellow like myself, Charles Henry? Many gallant generals and officers fall in battle; the earth drinks their blood, and no one knows where they lie. And with golden letters, did you say, Charles? Well, I am curious to know what you would place upon my tombstone."

"I will tell you, Fritz. I will write on your tombstone—'Here lies Fritz Kober; the most faithful friend, the best soul, the most honest heart; good and simple as a child, brave as a hero, constant as a dove, and true as a hound.'"

"But am I all that?" said Fritz, amazed.

"Yes, you are all that!" said Charles, with a trembling voice. "You have been more than this to me, and I will never forget it. I was a poor, shrinking youth when I came to this camp; I knew nothing—could do nothing. My comrades, who soon found me out, mocked and complained of me, and played all manner of jokes upon me. They ridiculed me, because I had no beard; they mimicked me, because my voice was soft and unsteady; they asserted that I would make a miserable soldier, because I grew deadly pale at parade. Who was it took pity on me, and opposed themselves to my rude, unfeeling companions? Who scolded and threatened to strike them, if they did not allow me to go my own way, in peace and quiet? Who was patient with my stupidity, and taught me how to go through with my military duties creditably, and how to manage my horse? You! you, dear Fritz! you alone. You were always at my side, when others threatened. You were patient as a mother when she teaches her dear little boy his letters, and looks kindly upon him, and is good to him, even when he is dull and inattentive."

"Well," said Fritz Kober, thoughtfully, "one can do nothing better than to be good to a man who deserves it, and who is himself so kind, and pure, and brave, that a poor fellow like myself feels ashamed, and looks down when the soft eyes are fixed upon him. I tell you what, Charles Henry, there is a power in your eyes, and they have subdued me. I think the angels in heaven have just such eyes as yours, and when you look upon me so softly and kindly, my heart bounds with delight. I have dreamed of your eyes, Charles Henry; I have blushed in my sleep when I thought I had uttered a coarse curse, and you looked upon me sorrowfully. I know you cannot endure cursing, or drink, or even tobacco."

"My father was a poor schoolmaster," said Charles Henry; "we lived quietly together, and he could not bear cursing. He used to say, 'When men cursed, it hurt God like the toothache.' He said —'God had not made the corn to grow, that men might make brandy, but bread.' We were too poor to buy beer and wine, so we drank water, and were content."

"Your father was right," said Fritz, thoughtfully. "I believe, myself, corn was not intended to make brandy, and I don't care for it; I will give it up altogether. If we live through this war, and receive good bounty money, we will buy a few acres, and build us a little house, and live together, and cultivate our land, and plant corn; and, in the evening, when our work is done, we will sit on the bench before the door, and you will relate some of your beautiful little stories; and so we will live on together till we are old and die."

"But you have forgotten one thing, Fritz."

"What is that, Charles Henry?"

"You have forgotten that you will take a wife into your little house, and she will soon cast me out."

"Let her try it!" cried Fritz, enraged, and doubling his fist threateningly. "Let her try only to show the door to Charles Henry, and I will shut her out, and she shall never return—never! But," said he, softly, "it is not necessary to think of this; I will never take a wife. We will live together; we need no third person to make strife between us."

Charles said nothing. He looked smilingly into the glowing fire, and then at his comrade, with an amused but tender expression.

If Fritz had seen it, his heart would have bounded again, but he was too much occupied then with his own thoughts to look up.

"Listen, Charles. If nothing comes of our little piece of ground and our house—if my last ball comes to-morrow and carries me off—"

"Stop, stop, Fritz; I will hold my head so that the same ball will carry it off!"

"If you do that, I will be very angry with you," cried Fritz. "You are too young to die, and I will be glad even in my grave to know that you are walking on the green earth. In order to do well, you must have gold; therefore you must be my heir. If I fall, these beautiful gold pieces belong to you; you shall not put a tombstone over me. Buy yourself a few acres, Charles Henry, and when your corn grows and blossoms, that shall be my monument."

Charles took his hand, and his eyes were filled with tears. "Speak no more of death," said he, softly; "it makes my heart heavy, and I shall lose my courage in the battle to-morrow when I think of all you have said. Ugh! how cold it is! My soul feels frosted!"

"I will go and seek a little more wood," said Fritz, springing up, "and make a good fire, and then you shall be warmed."

He hurried off, and Charles remained alone by the fire, looking gravely on the glowing coals; he smiled from time to time, and then he breathed heavily, as if oppressed by some weighty secret. Suddenly he heard a voice behind him.

"Ah! I have found the fire again! Good-evening, children."

"Good-evening, sir king. Comrades, wake up; the king is here!"

"No, no; let your comrades sleep," said the king, softly. "The fire will do me good. I found the right path to the fire, as I said. Your dragoons have uncovered my quarters, and the cold blasts of wind whistle through them and freeze the water in my room. I prefer to sit by the fire and warm myself."

He was about to seat himself on the straw near the fire, when a harsh voice called out:

"March on!—every lazy scamp wants a place by the fire, but not one of them brings a splinter of wood."

Fritz Kober was behind them with the wood; he had found it with great difficulty, and he was angry when he saw a strange soldier in his place by the side of Charles Henry.

The king turned to him quietly.

"You are right, my son!—come on! I will make room for you."

"It is the king!" exclaimed Fritz, turning as if to fly. But the king held him.

"Remain where you are, my son; you brought the wood, and you have the best right. I only wish to warm myself a little, and I think there is room for us all."

He seated himself upon the straw, and nodded to Fritz Kober to take a seat by him. Fritz tremblingly obeyed, and Charles stirred the fire, which flamed up beautifully.

King Frederick gazed at the flickering flames. Charles and Fritz sat on each side of him, and watched him in respectful silence; around the watch-fire lay the sleeping dragoons. After a long pause the king raised his head and looked about him.

"Well, children, to-morrow will be a hot day, and we must strike the Austrians boldly."

"Yes, as we struck the French at Rossbach, your majesty," said Fritz. "Mark me! it will go off bravely, and when we are done with the Austrians we will march to Constantinople."

"What will we do in Constantinople?" said the king.

"Nothing, your majesty, but march there with you, whip the Turks, and take all their gold!"

"Not quite so fast, my son."

"Why not, sir king? We have chopped up the French army; to-morrow we will do the same for the Austrians; and then, why not whip the Turks?"

The king smiled, and said:

"Well, well, but first we must give the Austrians a good drubbing."

"And, by my soul, we will do that," said Fritz, eagerly. "Your majesty may believe me—I will march with you to the end of the earth, and so will my friend Charles Buschman. If we have only a little to eat, we will find water everywhere; so lead us where you will!"

The king's eyes flashed: "By heaven! it is a pleasure to lead such soldiers to battle!" Then turning, with a kindly expression, to Fritz Kober, he said: "Can you write?"

"Not well, your majesty; but Charles Henry Buschman can write much better than I. He is a scholar."

"Is that true?" said the king, gayly, to Charles.

"He will say 'No,' sir king; he cannot bear to be praised. But the truth remains, the truth even when denied—Charles is the bravest and wisest soldier in the army, and if there is justice in the world he will be made an officer."

"You must get your commission first, Fritz," said Charles, indifferently; "you earned it long ago, and if the king only knew all that you did at Rossbach, you would have it now."

"What did he do?" said the king.

"Nothing, your majesty," said Fritz.

"Yes, your majesty," said Charles, zealously; "he hewed right and left until the sparks flew in every direction. Our commander had told us the disgusting Frenchmen wanted to take our winter quarters, and even when Fritz Kober's sword was still whizzing among them, they had the insolence to cry out, '*Quartier! quartier!*' —then was Fritz enraged, and cut them down like corn-stalks, and cried out, 'Yes, yes! I will give you quarters, but they will be underground!'"

"Only think," said Fritz, "they were flying before us, and the impudent scamps, when we captured them, would still twit us with the winter quarters they had intended to rob us of. How could I help cutting them to pieces?"

"But he spared those who cried 'Pardon,' your majesty," said Charles Henry, "he only took them prisoners. Nine prisoners did Fritz Kober take at Rossbach."*

"I suppose the five prisoners you took were men of straw, that you say nothing of them," cried Fritz.

The king looked well pleased from one to the other.

"It appears to me you are both brave soldiers, and the braver because you do not boast of your deeds. Are you always such good friends as to seek to do each other kindly service?"

"Your majesty, Charles Henry is my truest friend, and if you wish to do me a service, make him an officer."

"But he says he will not be made an officer unless you are made one, so there is nothing left for me to do but to promote both! If in the battle to-morrow you fight like heroes, you shall both be made officers. Now, children, be quiet, let me rest a little. I do not

* The Prussians had been told that the Frenchmen intended to take possession of their winter quarters, and this enraged them greatly. When the French cavalry were flying at Rossbach, they used the German word *quartier*, thinking they would be better understood. The Prussians looked upon this as an insolent jest, and gave no quarter.—*Nicolai's Characteristics and Anecdotes.*

want to sleep—cannot you tell me some little story, some pretty little fairy tale to keep my heavy eyes from closing?"

"Charles knows many fairy tales, sir king, and if you command it he must relate one."

"Oh, yes, your majesty, I know the history of a fairy who knew and loved the brave son of a king, and when the prince went into battle she transformed herself into a sword, that she might be always by the side of him she loved."

"Tell me this pretty story, my son."

Charles Henry began to relate. Deep silence reigned about the camp. Here and there a word was spoken in sleep, a loud snore, or the neighing of a horse. The fires were burned down, and the coals glowed like fire-flies upon the dark ground.

The moon stood over the camp and illuminated the strange and parti-colored scene with her soft rays, and called out the most wonderful contrasts of light and shade. Far, far away, in the dim distance, one blood-red point could be seen; it looked like a crimson star in the east. This was the camp-fire of the Austrians. This mighty army was encamped behind Leuthen. The king gazed in that direction with eager expectation, and listened with painful attention to every distant sound.

The silence of death reigned there; no sound or voice was heard. The king, being convinced of this, sank back once more upon the straw, and listened to Charles Henry Buschman.

It was indeed a beautiful fairy tale; so wild and so fantastic that Fritz listened with eyes extended and almost breathless to every word. At last, as the handsome prince was drawing his last breath, the lovely fairy sprang from his sword and brought the dead to life with her warm kisses, Fritz was in an ecstasy of excitement, and interrupted Charles by an outcry of rapture.

"This is a true story, sir king!" cried he, passionately; "every word is true, and he who don't believe it is a puppy!"

"Well, well," said the king, "I believe every word, friend."

Charles Henry went on with his fairy tales; but, notwithstanding the wonders he related, sleep at last overcame his friend! Fritz's eyes closed, but he murmured in his sleep:

"It is all true—all true!"

Charles Henry himself, wearied by the exertions of the last few days, felt his eyelids to be as heavy as lead, his words came slowly, then ceased altogether.

The king looked at his slumbering soldiers, then far away toward the watch-fires of the Austrian camp.

Silence still reigned. The moon showed distant objects in the clearest light, and nothing suspicious or alarming could be seen.

"It was false intelligence which was brought to me," said the king. "It is not true that the Austrians are on the march and intend to surprise me. They sleep!—we will not see them till to-morrow. I will withdraw to my quarters."

King Frederick stepped slowly through the ranks of the sleepers, and gave a sign to the officer and the four soldiers who had accompanied him, but remained at a distance from the fire, to move lightly and awaken no one.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BATTLE OF LEUTHEN.

EARLY the next morning the king left his tent. The generals were anxiously awaiting him. His countenance glowed with energy and determination, and his brilliant eyes flashed with a sparkling light. Inspired by the appearance of their hero, the clouded brows of the assembled generals became clearer. They felt that his lofty brow was illumined by genius, and that the laurels which crowned it could never fade. They were now confident, courageous, ready for the battle, and, although they had at first disapproved of the king's plan of attacking the enemy who had twice overcome them, now that he was in their midst they felt secure of success.

Spies reported that the Austrian army had left their camp at sunrise and advanced toward Leuthen; they spoke much and loudly of the strength of the enemy, and of the eagerness of the soldiers to fall upon the weak Prussian army.

At a sign from the king, Seidlitz approached him, and informed him of the latest rumors.

"It is a fearful army we are to attack," said Seidlitz; "more than twice our number."

"I am aware of the strength of the enemy," said the king, quietly, "but nothing is left for me but victory or death. Were they stationed upon the church-tower of Breslau I would attack them."

Then approaching the other generals, he continued in a loud voice:

"You are aware, gentlemen, that Prince Charles, of Lothringen, succeeded in taking Schweidnitz, defeating the Duke of Bevern, and has made himself master of Breslau, while I was protecting Berlin from the French army. The capital of Silesia, and all the munitions of war stowed there, have been lost. All these circum-

stances are calculated to distress me deeply, had I not a boundless confidence in your courage, your resolution, and your devoted love to your country. There is, I think, not one among us who has not been distinguished for some great, some noble deed. I feel assured that your courage will not now fail in this hour of direst need. I would feel as if I had accomplished nothing were I to leave Silesia in the possession of the Austrians. Against all acknowledged rules of war, I am determined to attack the army of Charles of Lothringen, though it is three times as strong as my own. Notwithstanding the number of the enemy, or its advantageous position, I feel confident of success. This step must be taken, or all is lost! We must defeat the Austrians, or fall beneath their batteries! This is my opinion, and thus I shall act. Make my determination known to every officer. Acquaint the soldiers with the events that will soon occur —tell them that I require unconditional obedience! Remember that you are Prussians!—do not show yourselves unworthy of the name! But should there be any among you who fear to share these dangers with us, they can leave at once, and shall not be reproached by me."

The king ceased speaking, and looked inquiringly at his listeners. Upon every countenance he read determination, courage, and inspiration, but here and there were some whose brows became clouded at the king's last suggestion, and tears were sparkling in old General Rohr's eyes. The king pressed the general's hand almost tenderly.

"Ah, my dear friend," said he, "I did not suspect you. But I again say, that if any amongst you wishes leave of absence, he shall have it."

Profound quiet followed these words. No one approached the king—no sound disturbed the solemn stillness. At a distance, the loud shouts and hurrahs of the soldiers, preparing for battle, could be heard. The king's countenance became clear, and he continued with enthusiasm:

"I knew beforehand that none of you would leave me. I counted upon your assistance; with it, I shall be victorious. Should I fall in this battle, you must look to your country for reward; and now, away to the camp, and repeat to your men what I have said to you. Farewell, gentlemen, before long we will either have defeated the enemy, or we will see one another no more."

And now there arose from the generals and officers loud, joyous shouts.

"We will conquer or die!" cried Seidlitz, whose daring, youthful countenance sparkled with delight "We will conquer or die!" was repeated by all.

At last the brave words reached the camp, and were reëchoed by

thirty thousand lusty throats. There was universal joy. Old gray-headed warriors, who had followed the king into many battles, who had conquered repeatedly with him, shook hands with and encouraged each other, and warned the younger soldiers to be brave and fearless.

Resting upon his horse, the king had been a joyful witness to all this enthusiasm. At this moment, a troop of soldiers, numbering about fifty, approached him. The commanding officer was greeted with a kindly smile.

"You are Lieutenant von Frankenberg?" said the king. And as the lieutenant bowed in answer, he continued: "General Kleist has spoken of you as being a brave and trustworthy officer. I have therefore a strange commission for you. Listen well! do not lose a word of what I say. Come nearer. And now," said the king, in a low voice, "be attentive. In the approaching battle, I will have to expose myself more than usual; you and your fifty men shall guard me. You must watch over me, and be careful that I fall not into the hands of the enemy. Should I fall, cover my body with your mantle, and carry me to the wagon, which shall be stationed behind the first battalion. Leave me there, and tell no one of what has occurred. The battle must continue—the enemy must be defeated."

When the king had thus made his testament, he dismissed the lieutenant, and advanced toward his body-guard.

"Good-morning!" cried the king, cheerfully.

"Good-morning, father!" was the universal answer. Then the old graybeards, standing beside the king, said again:

"Good-morning, father! it is very cold to-day."

"It will be warm enough before the day is over, boys!" said the king. "There is much to be done. Be brave, my children, and I will care for you as a father."

An old soldier, with silver hair, and the scars of many wounds upon his face, approached the king.

"Your majesty," said he, in an earnest voice, "if we are crippled, what will become of us?"

"You shall be taken care of," said the king.

"Will your majesty give me your hand upon this promise?"

This question was followed by deep silence. All present were gazing anxiously at the king and the old guard. The king advanced, and laid his hand in that of the old soldier.

"I swear, that any of you who are crippled, shall be taken care of."

The old warrior turned with tearful eyes to his comrades.

"Well," said he, "you hear him? he is and will continue to be the King of Prussia and our father. The one who deserts is a rascal."

"Long live our Fritz!" and throughout the whole camp resounded the cry—"Long live our Fritz! Long live our king!"

"Onward! onward!" was the cry, for at the end of the plain the enemy could be seen approaching.

"Forward!" cried the soldiers, falling one by one into their places, as the king, followed by Lieutenant Frankenberg and his men, galloped past them.

A turn in the road showed the Prussians the enormous size of the enemy's army. Silence prevailed for a few moments. Suddenly, here and there a voice could be heard singing a battle-hymn, and soon, accompanied by the band, the whole army was breathing out in song an earnest prayer to God.

A guard, approaching the king, said:

"Is it your majesty's desire that the soldiers should cease singing?"

The king shook his head angrily.

"No!" said he, "let them alone. With such an army, God can but give me victory."

Nearer and nearer came the enemy, covering the plain with their numbers, and gazing with amazement at the little army that dared to oppose them. By the Austrian generals, smiling so contemptuously upon their weak opponents, one thing had been forgotten. The Austrians, confident of success, were not in the least enthusiastic; the Prussians, aware of their danger, and inspired by love for their king, had nerved themselves to the contest. The armies now stood before each other in battle array. The king was at the front, the generals were flying here and there, delivering their orders. In obedience to these orders, the army suddenly changed its position, and so strange, so unsuspected was the change, that General Daun, turning to the Prince Lothringen, said:

"The Prussians are retreating! we will not attack them."

Certain of this fact, they were off their guard, and disorder reigned in their camp. This security was suddenly changed to terror. They saw the Prussians rapidly approaching, threatening at once both wings of their army. Messenger upon messenger was sent, imploring help from General Daun and Charles of Lothringen. The Prussians were upon them, felling them to the earth, regardless of danger—regardless of the numerous cannon which were playing upon them. Daun, with a part of his command, hurried to the aid of General Luchesi, but he was too late; Luchesi had fallen, and terror and disorder were rapidly spreading in the right wing, while from the left, Nadasky had already dispatched ten messengers, imploring assistance from Charles of Lothringen. In doubt as to which most needed help, he at last determined upon the right wing, whose ranks were thinning

rapidly; he sent them aid, and took no notice of Nadasky's messengers. And now the Prussians fell upon the left wing of the Austrians. This attack was made with fury, and the Austrians retreated in wild disorder. It was in vain that other regiments came to their aid; they had no time to arrange themselves before they were forced back. They stumbled upon one another, the flying overtaking and trampling upon the flying. Again and again the imperial guards endeavored to place themselves in line of battle; they were at once overpowered by the Prussian cavalry, who, intoxicated with victory, threw themselves upon them with demoniac strength. Yes, intoxicated—mad with victory, were these Prussians. With perfect indifference they saw their friends, their comrades, fall beside them; they did not mourn over them, but revenged their death tenfold upon the enemy. Those even who fell were inspired by enthusiasm and courage. Forgetful of their wounds, of their torn and broken limbs, they gazed with joy and pride at their comrades, joining in their shouts and hurrahs, until death sealed their lips.

A Prussian grenadier, whose left leg had been shot off in the early part of the battle, raised himself from the ground; using his gun as a crutch, he dragged himself to a spot which the army had to pass, and cried to the comrades who were looking pityingly upon his bleeding limb: "Fight like brave Prussians, brothers! Conquer or die for your king!"

Another grenadier, who had lost both legs, lay upon the ground weltering in his blood, quietly smoking his pipe. An Austrian general galloping by held in his horse and looked in amazement at the soldier. "How is it possible, comrade," said he, "that in your fearful condition you can smoke? Death is near to you."

Taking the pipe from his mouth, the grenadier answered with white, trembling lips: "Well, and what of it? Do I not die for my king?"

Where the danger was the greatest, there was the king encouraging his soldiers. When a column was seen to reel, there was Frederick in their midst inspiring new courage by his presence. The king was the soul of his army, and as his soul was *sans peur et sans reproche*, the army was victorious. Napoleon, speaking of this battle, says: "Cette bataille de Leuthen est propre à immortaliser le caractère moral de Frédéric, et met à jour ses grands talents militaires." And somewhat later, he says: "Cette bataille était un chef d'œuvre de mouvements, de manœuvres, et de résolution, seul elle suffirait pour immortaliser Frédéric, et lui donne un rang parmi les plus grands généraux!"

The victory was gained. The defeated Austrians fled in haste, leaving a hundred cannon, fifty banners, and more than twenty

thousand prisoners in the hands of the Prussians; while upon the battle-field six thousand of their dead and wounded were lying, with but two thousand dead and wounded Prussians. The victory belonged to Prussia. They had all distinguished themselves; the king and every common soldier had done his duty. Frederick, accompanied by his staff, to which Lieutenant Frankenberg and his fifty men did not now belong, passed the bloody, smoking battle-field. His countenance was sparkling with joy—his eyes shone like stars. He seemed looking for some one to whom to open his grateful heart.

He who had given most assistance in the battle was Prince Moritz von Dessau, whom at the battle of Collin the king had threatened with his sword, and with whom he had ever since been angry because his prophecy proved true. But there was no anger now in the king's heart; and as he had, in the presence of all his staff, threatened the prince, he wished also in their presence to thank and reward him. The prince was at a slight distance from him, so busily engaged in giving orders that he did not perceive the king until he was quite close to him.

"I congratulate you upon this victory," said the king, in a loud voice—"I congratulate you, field-marshal."

The prince bowed in a silent, absent manner, and continued to give his orders.

The king, raising his voice, said: "Do you not hear, field-marshal? I congratulate you!"

The prince looked hastily at the king. "How? Your majesty," said he, doubtfully, "has appointed me—"

"My field-marshal," said the king, interrupting him. "And well have you deserved this promotion; you have assisted me in this battle as I have never before been assisted." He grasped the prince's hand and pressed it tenderly, and there were tears of emotion not only in the eyes of the new field-marshal, but also in those of the king.

A fearful day's work was finished—how fearful, could be seen by the wounded, the dying lying pell-mell upon the battle-field amidst the dead, too exhausted to move. But the day had passed. The cries and shouts of the flying enemy had now ceased—the victory, the battle-field, belonged to the Prussians. What was now most needed by them was an hour's rest. Above the bloody battle-field, above the dying, the sleeping, the groaning, the sighing, now rose the moon grandly, solemnly, as if to console the dead and to lead the living to raise their grateful prayers to heaven. And grateful praise ascended above that night—thanks for the preservation of their own and their friends' lives—thanks for their hero's victory.

Side by side, whispering in low tones, lay the soldiers—for the hour seemed to all too solemn to be broken by any loud sound.

No hearts were so full of gratitude and joy as those of Charles Henry Buschman and Fritz Kober. In the pressure of the battle they had been separated and had not again met during the engagement. In vain they had sought and called upon one another, and each one thought of the fearful possibility that the other had fallen. At last they stumbled upon each other. With shouts of joy they rushed into each other's arms.

"You are not wounded, Fritz Kober?" said Charles Henry, with a beating heart.

"I am unharmed; but you, my friend?"

"Only a little cut in the hand, nothing more. How many prisoners did you take?"

"Seven, Charles Henry."

"You will be promoted! You will be an officer!"

"Not unless you are also. How many prisoners did you take?"

"I am not sure, Fritz; I think there were nine. But the captain will know."

"We will both be promoted, the king promised it, and now I am willing to accept it."

"But what is this to us now, my friend?" said Charles Henry; "we have found one another, and I am indifferent to all else."

"You are right, Charles Henry; this has been a fearful, a terrible day. My knees tremble beneath me—let us rest a while."

He laid himself upon the ground. Charles Henry knelt beside him, laying one hand upon his shoulder, and looked at the starry sky; a holy smile glorified his countenance. As he gazed at the moon, tender feelings were at work in his heart. He thought of his distant home—of the graves of his loved parents, upon which the moon was now shining as brightly as upon this bloody battle-field. He thought how kind and merciful God had been to preserve his friend, his only consolation, the one joy of his weary, lonesome life. The solemn stillness by which he was surrounded, the bright moonlight which illuminated the battle-field, the thought of the hard struggle of the past day, all acted strongly upon his feelings. The brave, daring soldier, Charles Henry Buschman, was once more transformed into the gentle, soft-hearted Anna Sophia Detzloff; now, when danger was past, she felt herself a weak, trembling woman. Deep, inexpressible emotion, earnest prayers to God, were busy in Anna Sophia's heart.

Kneeling upon the ground, resting on her friend, she raised her eyes heavenward, and commenced singing in an earnest, impassioned tone that glorious hymn, "Thanks unto God!" Fritz Kober, actu-

ated by the same feelings, joined in the hymn, and here and there a comrade lent his voice to swell the anthem; it became stronger, louder, until at last, like a mighty stream, it passed over the battle-field, knocking at every heart, and urging it to prayer, finding everywhere an open ear.

The moon stood smiling above the battle-field, upon which eight thousand dead and wounded men were lying. Even the wounded, who a short time before filled the air with groans of pain and agony, raised themselves to join in the song of praise which was now sung, not by a hundred, not by a thousand, but by thirty thousand soldiers, thirty thousand heroes, who, after that bloody day had earned the right to sing "Thanks unto God."

CHAPTER XV.

WINTER QUARTERS IN BRESLAU.

FAINT and exhausted, the king had withdrawn to his room; he was alone. To-day was the twenty-fourth of January, Frederick's birthday, and, although he had forbidden all congratulations, he could not avoid receiving the highest tribunals of Breslau, and also a few deputations of the citizens of this reconquered city. These visits wearied the king; he was grave and out of spirits. Once more alone, he could indulge in the sad memories that came over him involuntarily and forcibly. For here in Breslau he had lately experienced a bitter disappointment; every thing in the castle reminded him of the treacherous friend whom he had loved so dearly, and who had so shamefully betrayed him.

The king was now thinking of the Bishop von Schaffgotsch. An expression of painful gloom clouded his face, he felt solitary and deserted; the cold, silent room chilled his heart, and the snow blown against the window by the howling winds, oppressed him strangely. He was more dejected and anxious than he had ever felt before a battle.

"The marquis cannot travel in such weather," he said, sighing, "and my musicians will be careful not to trust themselves upon the highway; they will imagine the snow has blocked up the way, and that it is impossible to come through. They will remain in Berlin, caring but little that I am counting the weary hours until they arrive. Yes, yes, this is an example of the almighty power of a king; a few snow-flakes are sufficient to set his commands aside, and the king remains but an impotent child of the dust. Of what avail is it that I have conquered the Austrians and the French? I

have sown dragons' teeth from which new enemies will arise, new battles, perhaps new defeats. What have I gained by consecrating my heart to my friends? They are but serpents—I have nourished them in my breast, and they will sting when I least suspect them. Even those whom I still trust, forsake me now when I most need them!"

The wild storm increased, and blew a cloud of snow-flakes against the window, and the wind whistled mournfully in the chimney.

"No," murmured the king, "D'Argens will certainly not come; he will remain quietly in his beloved bed, and from there write me a touching epistle concerning the bonds of friendship. I know that when feeling does not flow from the hearts of men, it flows eloquently from ink as a pitiful compensation. But," he continued after a pause, "this is all folly! Solitude makes a dreamer of me—I am sighing for my friends as a lover sighs for his sweetheart! Am I then so entirely alone? Have I not my books? Come, Lucretius, thou friend in good and evil days; thou sage, thou who hast never left me without counsel and consolation! Come and cheer thy pupil—teach him how to laugh at this pitiful world as it deserves!"

Taking Lucretius from the table, and stretching himself upon the sofa, he commenced reading. Deep stillness surrounded him. Bells were ringing in the distance in honor of the royal birthday. The Breslauers, who had so shortly before joyfully welcomed the conquering Austrians, now desired to convince the King of Prussia that they were his zealous subjects. The evening of the kingly birthday they wished to show the joy of their hearts by a brilliant illumination.

The king still read, and became so absorbed that he did not hear the door gently opened. The tall, slender form of the Marquis d'Argens appeared at the threshold. Overcome with joyful emotions, he remained standing, and gazing with clouded eyes at the king. Composing himself, he closed the door softly behind him and advanced.

"Sire, will you forgive me for entering unannounced?"

The king sprang from his seat and held out both his hands. "Welcome, welcome! I thank you for coming."

The marquis could not reply; he pressed his lips silently upon the king's hands. "My God," he said, in a trembling voice, "how my heart has longed for this happy moment—how many offerings I have vowed to Heaven if allowed to see the king once more."

"You did not win Heaven by promises alone, friend, but you have offered up a victim. You have left that precious bed which

you have occupied for the past eight months—you have gained a victory over yourself which is of more value than many victories."

"Ah, your majesty," cried the marquis, whose black eyes were again sparkling with mirth, "I now feel that my poor heart spoke the truth when it declared that you were ever by its side. We have really not been separated, and your majesty begins with me to-day where you left off but yesterday. You laugh now as then at me, and my poor bed, which has heard for more than a year past only my sighs and prayers for your majesty's success. It was not difficult for me to leave it and to obey the summons of my king. If you think this conquest over myself worth more than a victory over our enemies, how lightly the hero of Rossbach and Leuthen regards victories!"

"Not so, marquis; but you know what the renowned King of the Hebrews said—that wise king who rejoiced in a thousand wives: 'He who conquers himself is greater than he who taketh a city.' You, marquis, are this rare self-conqueror, and you shall be rewarded right royally. I have had rooms prepared as warm and comfortable as the marquise herself could have arranged for you. The windows are stuffed with cotton, furs are lying before the stove, cap and foot-muff, so your faithful La Pierre may wrap and bundle you up to your heart's content. Not a breath of air shall annoy you, and all your necessities shall be provided for with as much reverence as if you were the holy fire in the temple of Vesta, and I the priestess that guards it."

The marquis laughed heartily. "Should the fire ever burn low and the flame pale, I beg my exalted priestess to cast her burning glance upon me, and thus renew my heat. Sire, allow me, before all other things, to offer my congratulations. May Heaven bless this day which rose like a star of hope upon all who love the great, the beautiful, the exalted, and the—"

"Enough, enough," cried Frederick; "if you begin in this way, I shall fly from you; I shall believe you are one of those stupid deputations with which etiquette greets the king. In this room, friend, there is no king, and when we are here alone we are two simple friends, taking each other warmly by the hand and congratulating ourselves upon having lived through another weary year, and having the courage bravely to meet the years that remain. Should you still desire to add a wish to this, marquis, pray that the war fever which has seized all Europe, may disappear—that the triumvirate of France, Russia, and Austria, may be vanquished—that the tyrants of this universe may not succeed in binding the whole world in the chains they have prepared for it."

"Your majesty will know how to obtain this result—to break

this chain—and if they will not yield willingly, the hero of Rossbach and Leuthen will know how to crush them in his just rage."

"God grant it!" sighed the king; "I long for peace, although my enemies say I am the evil genius that brings discord and strife into the world. They say that if Frederick of Prussia did not exist, the entire world would be a paradise of peace and love. I could say to them, as Demosthenes said to the Athenians: 'If Philip were dead, what would it signify? You would soon make another Philip.' I say to the Austrians: 'Your ambition, your desire for universal reign, would soon rouse other eneimes. The liberties of Germany, and indeed of all Europe, will always find defenders.' We will speak no more of these sad themes; they belong to the past and the future. Let us try to forget, friend, that we are in winter quarters at Breslau, and imagine ourselves to be at our dear Sans-Souci."

"In our beautiful convent," said the marquis, "whose abbot has so long been absent, and whose monks are scattered to the four winds."

"It is true," sighed the king, gloomily, "widely scattered; and when the abbot returns to Sans-Souci, every thing will be changed and lonely. Oh, marquis, how much I have lost since we parted!"

"How much you have gained, sire! how many new laurels crown your heroic brow!"

"You speak of my victories," said the king, shaking his head; "but believe me, my heart has suffered defeats from which it will never recover. I am not speaking of the death of my mother—although that is a wound that will never heal; that came from the hand of Providence; against its decrees no man dare murmur. I speak of more bitter, more cruel defeats, occasioned by the ingratitude and baseness of men."

"Your majesty still thinks of the unworthy Abbot of Prades," said D'Argens, sadly.

"No, marquis; that hurt, I confess. I liked him, but I never loved him—he was not my friend; his treachery grieved but did not surprise me. I knew he was weak. He sold me! Finding himself in my camp, he made use of his opportunity and betrayed to the enemy all that came to his knowledge. He had a small soul, and upon such men you cannot count. But from another source I received a great wrong—this lies like iron upon my heart, and hardens it. I loved Bishop Schaffgotsch, marquis; I called him friend; I gave him proof of my friendship. I had a right to depend on his faithfulness, and believe in a friendship he had so often confirmed by oaths. My love, at least, was unselfish, and deserved not to be betrayed. But he was false in the hour of danger, like Peter who betrayed his Master. The Austrians had scarcely entered Breslau,

when he not only denied me, but went further—he trampled upon the orders of my house, and held a *Te Deum* in the dome in honor of the Austrian victory at Collin." The king ceased and turned away, that the marquis might not see the tears that clouded his eyes.

"Sire," cried the marquis, deeply moved, "forget the ingratitude of these weak souls, who were unworthy of a hero's friendship."

"I will; but enough of this. You are here, and I still believe in you, marquis. You and the good Lord Marshal are the only friends left me to lean upon when the baseness of men makes my heart fail."

"These friends will never fail you, sire," said the marquis, deeply moved; "your virtues and your love made them strong."

The king took his hand affectionately. "Let us forget the past," said he, gayly; "and as we both, in our weak hours, consider ourselves poets, let us dream that we are in my library in our beloved Saus-Souci. We will devote this holy time of peace to our studies, for that is, without doubt, the best use we can make of it. You shall see a flood of verses with which I amused myself in camp, and some epigrams written against my enemies."

"But if we were even now in Sans-Souci, sire, I do not think you would give this hour to books. I dare assert you would be practising with Quantz, and preparing for the evening concerts."

"Yes, yes; but here we are denied that happiness," said the king, sadly. "I have written for a part of my band, and they will be here I hope in eight days; but Graun and Quantz will certainly not—" The king paused and listened attentively. It seemed to him as if he heard the sound of a violin in the adjoining room, accompanied by the light tones of a flute. Yes, it was indeed so; some one was tuning a violin and the soft sound of the flute mingled with the violoncello. A flush of rosy joy lighted the king's face—he cast a questioning glance upon the marquis, who nodded smilingly. With a joyful cry the king crossed the room—an expression of glad surprise burst from his lips.

There they were, the loved companions of his evening concerts. There was Graun, with his soft, dreamy, artistic face; there was Quantz, with his silent, discontented look—whose grumbling, even Frederick was compelled to respect; there was the young Fasch, whom the king had just engaged, and who played the violoncello in the evening concerts.

As the king advanced to meet them, they greeted him loudly. "Long live our king!—our great Frederick!" Even Quantz forgot himself for a moment, and laughed good-humoredly.

"Listen, sire; it will be a mortal sin if you scold us for coming to you without being summoned by your majesty. This is through-

out all Prussia a festal day, and no one should desecrate it by scolding or fault-finding—not even the king."

"Oh, I am not disposed to scold," said Frederick, in low tones; he did not wish them to hear how his voice trembled—"I do not scold—I thank you heartily."

"We had nothing better to send your majesty on your birthday than our unworthy selves," said Graun; "we come, therefore, to lay ourselves at our king's feet, and say to him: 'Accept our hearts, and do not spurn the gift.' A warm, human heart is the richest gift one man can offer another. Your majesty is a great king, and a good and great man, and we dare approach you, therefore, as man to man."

"And my Graun is so renowned a composer, that any man must count it an honor to be beloved by him," said Frederick, tenderly.

"For myself," said Quantz, gravely, handing the king a small roll carefully wrapped up, "I have brought seomthing more than my naked heart in honor of my king's birthday. I pray your majesty to accept it graciously." *

The king opened it hastily. "A flute!" cried he, joyfully, "and a flute made for me by the great master Quantz, I am sure."

"Yes, your majesty; all the time you were in the field, I have worked upon it. As the courier brought the news of the battle of Leuthen, all Berlin shouted for joy, and the banners floated in every street and at every window. Then this flute broke its silence for the first time—its first music was a hosanna to our great king."

"Fom this time forth," said Frederick, "let no man dare to say that battles are in vain. The bloody field of Leuthen produced a flute from Quantz; and by Heaven, that is a greater rarity than the most complete victory in these warlike days!"

"Sire," said the marquis, drawing some letters from his pocket, "I have also some gifts to offer. This is a letter from Algarotti, and a small box of Italian snuff, which he begs to add as an evidence of his rejoicing in your victories. † Here is a letter from Voltaire, and one from Lord Marshal."

"From all my distant friends—they have all thought of me," said Frederick, as he took the letters.

"But I have no time to read letters now; we will have music, and if agreeable to you, messieurs, we will practise a quartet which I composed during my solitude these last few days."

"Let us try it," said Quantz, carelessly opening the piano.

Frederick went to his room to seek his note-book, and place his letters upon the table, but, before he returned, he called the marquis to him.

* Pocüs, "Frederick the Great and his Friends."
† Ibid.

"D'Argens," said he, "may I not thank you for this agreeable surprise?"

"Yes, sire, I proposed it, and took the responsibility upon myself. If your majesty is displeased, I am the only culprit!"

"And why have you made yourself the postilion, and brought me all these letters, marquis?"

"Sire, because—"

"I will tell you, marquis," said Frederick, with a loving glance, and laying his hand upon D'Argens' shoulder; "you did this, because you knew my poor heart had received a deep wound, and you wished to heal it. You wished to surround me with many friends, and make me forget the one who fails, and who betrayed me. I thank you, marquis! Yours is a great heart, and I believe your balsam has magic in it. I thank you for this hour, it has done me good; and though the world may succeed in poisoning my heart, I will never—never distrust you; I will never forget this hour!"

"And now, messieurs," said Frederick, as he returned to the musicians, "we will take our parts, and you, Quantz, take your place at the piano."

The concert began. Frederick stood behind the piano, at which Quantz sat; Graun and Fasch had withdrawn to the window, in order to enjoy the music, as Frederick was first to play a solo on his flute, with a simple piano accompaniment.

The king played artistically, and with a rare enthusiasm. The marquis was in ecstasy, and Graun uttered a few low bravos. Suddenly, all the musicians shuddered, and Quantz was heard to mutter angrily. The king had committed a great fault in his composition —a fault against the severest rules of art. He played on, however, quietly, and said, when he had completed the page—"*Da capo!*" and recommenced. Again came the false notes, frightful to the ears of musicians. And now Graun and Fasch could not keep time. The king held his breath.

"Go on, Quantz," said he, zealously, placing the flute again to his lips.

Quantz cast a sullen look at him.

"As your majesty pleases," said he, and he played so fiercely that Graun and Fasch shivered, and Quantz himself whistled to drown the discord. The unlearned marquis looked in blessed ignorance upon his royal friend, and the beautiful music brought tears to his eyes. When the piece was ended, the king said to Quantz.

"Do you find this text false?"

"Yes, your majesty, it is false!"

"And you two also believe it false?"

"Yes, your majesty, it is false!" said Graun and Fasch.

"But, if the composer will have it so?"

"It is still false!" said Quantz, sullenly.

"But if it pleases me, and I think it melodious?"

"Your majesty can never find it so," said Quantz, angrily. "The notes are false, and what is false can never please your majesty."

"Well, well!" said the king, good-humoredly; "don't be quite so angry! it is, after all, not a lost battle! * If this passage is impossible, we will strike it out."

"If your majesty does that, it will be a beautiful composition, and I would be proud myself to have composed it."

The king smiled, well pleased. It was evident that this praise of his proud and stern master was most acceptable to the hero of Leuthen and Rossbach.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BROKEN HEART.

A CARRIAGE stopped before the pleasure palace of Oranienburg. The lady who sat in it, cast anxious, questioning glances at the windows, and breathed a heavy sigh when she saw the closed shutters, and observed the absence of life and movement in the palace. At this moment an officer stepped hastily from the great portal to greet the lady, and assist her to descend.

"Does he still live?" said she, breathlessly.

"He lives, countess, and awaits you eagerly!" said the officer.

She did not reply, but raised her large, melancholy eyes thankfully to heaven, and her lips moved as if in prayer.

They stepped silently and rapidly through the dazzling saloons, now drear and deserted. Their pomp and splendor was painful; it harmonized but little with their sad presentiments.

"We have arrived, countess," said the officer, as they stood before a closed and thickly-curtained door. "The prince is in this garden-saloon."

The lady's heart beat loudly, and her lips were pale as death. She leaned for a moment against the door, and tried to gather strength.

"I am ready! announce me to the prince!"

"That is unnecessary, countess. The prince's nerves are so sensitive, that the slightest noise does not escape him. He heard the rolling of your carriage-wheels, and knows that you are here. He is expecting you, and has commanded that you come unannounced.

* The king's own words.

Have the goodness to enter; you will be alone with the prince." He raised the curtain, and the countess looked back once more.

"Is there any hope?" said she, to her companion.

"None! The physician says he must die to-day!"

The countess opened the door so noiselessly, that not the slightest sound betrayed her presence. She sank upon a chair near the entrance, and fixed her tearful eyes with inexpressible agony upon the pale form, which lay upon the bed, near the open door, leading into the garden.

What!—this wan, emaciated figure, that countenance of deadly pallor, those fallen cheeks, those bloodless lips, the hollow temples, thinly shaded by the lifeless, colorless hair—was that Augustus William?—the lover of her youth, the worshipped dream-picture of her whole life, the never-effaced ideal of her faithful heart?

As she looked upon him, the sweetly-painful, sad, and yet glorious past, seemed to fill her soul. She felt that her heart was young, and beat, even now, as ardently for him who lay dying before her, as in the early time, when they stood side by side in the fulness of youth, beauty, and strength—when they stood side by side for the last time.

At that time, she died! Youth, happiness, heart were buried; but now, as she looked upon him, the coffin unclosed, the shroud fell back, and the immortal spirits greeted each other with the love of the olden time.

And now, Laura wept no more. Enthusiasm, inspiration were written upon her face. She felt no earthly pain; the heavenly peace of the resurrection morning filled her soul. She arose and approached the prince. He did not see her; his eyes were closed. Perhaps he slumbered; perhaps the king of terrors had already pressed his first bewildering kiss upon the pale brow. Laura bent over and looked upon him. Her long, dark ringlets fell around his face like a mourning veil. She listened to his light breathing, and, bowing lower, kissed the poor, wan lips.

He opened his eyes very quietly, without surprise. Peacefully, joyfully he looked up at her. And Laura—she asked no longer if that wasted form could be the lover of her youth. In his eyes she found the long-lost treasure—the love, the youth, the soul of the glorious past.

Slowly the prince raised his arms, and drew her toward him. She sank down, and laid her head by his cold cheek. Her hot breath wafted him a new life-current, and seemed to call back his soul from the spirit-world.

For a long time no word was spoken. How could they speak, in this first consecrated moment? They felt so much, that language

failed. They lay heart to heart, and only God understood their hollow sighs, their unspoken prayers, their suppressed tears. Only God was with them! God sent through the open doors the fresh fragrance of the flowers; He sent the winds, His messengers, through the tall trees, and their wild, melancholy voices were like a solemn organ, accompanying love's last hymn. In the distant thickets the nightingale raised her melancholy notes, for love's last greeting. Thus eternal Nature greets the dying sons of men.

God was with His children. Their thoughts were prayers; their eyes, which at first were fixed upon each other, now turned pleadingly to heaven.

"I shall soon be there!" said Prince Augustus—"soon! I shall live a true life, and this struggle with death will soon be over. For sixteen years I have been slowly dying, day by day, hour by hour. Laura, it has been sixteen years, has it not?"

She bowed silently.

"No," said he, gazing earnestly upon her; "it was but yesterday. I know now that it was but yesterday. You are just the same—unchanged, my Laura. This is the same angel-face which I have carried in my heart. Nothing is changed, and I thank God for it. It would have been a great grief to look upon you and find a strange face by my side. This is my Laura, my own Laura, who left me sixteen years ago. And now, look at me steadily; see what life has made of me; see how it has mastered me—tortured me to death with a thousand wounds! I call no man my murderer, but I die of these wounds. Oh, Laura! why did you forsake me? Why did you not leave this miserable, hypocritical, weary world of civilization, and follow me to the New World, where the happiness of a true life awaited us?"

"I dared not," said she; "God demanded this offering of me, and because I loved you boundlessly I was strong to submit. God also knows what it cost me, and how these many years I have struggled with my heart, and tried to learn to forget."

"Struggle no longer, Laura, I am dying; when I am dead you dare not forget me."

She embraced him with soft tenderness.

"No, no," whispered she, "God is merciful! He will not rob me of the only consolation of my joyless, solitary life. I had only this. To think he lives, he breathes the same air, he looks up into the same heavens—the same quiet stars greet him and me. And a day will come in which millions of men will shout and call him their king; and when I look upon his handsome face, and see him in the midst of his people, surrounded by pomp and splendor, I dare say to myself, That is my work. I loved him more than I loved my-

self, therefore he wears a crown—I had the courage not only to die for him, but to live without him, and therefore is he a king. Oh, my beloved, say not that you are dying!"

"If you love me truly, Laura, you will not wish me to live. Indeed I have long been dying. For sixteen years I have felt the death-worm in my heart—it gnaws and gnaws. I have tried to crush it—I wished to live, because I had promised you to bear my burden. I wished to prove myself a man. I gave the love which you laid at my feet, bathed in our tears and our blood, to my fatherland. I was told that I must marry, to promote the interest of my country, and I did so. I laid a mask over my face, and a mask over my heart. I wished to play my part in the drama of life to the end; I wished to honor my royal birth to which fate had condemned me. But it appears I was a bad actor. I was cast out from my service, my gay uniform and royal star torn from my breast. I, a prince, was sent home a humiliated, degraded, ragged beggar. I crept with my misery and my shame into this corner, and no one followed me. No one showed a spark of love for the poor, spurned cast-away. Love would have enabled me to overcome all, to defy the world, and to oppose its slanders boldly. I was left alone to bear my shame and my despair—wholly alone. I have a wife, I have children, and I am alone; they live far away from me, and at the moment of my death they will smile and be happy. I am the heir of a throne, but a poor beggar; I asked only of fate a little love, but I asked in vain. Fate had no pity—only when I am dead will I be a prince again; then they will heap honors upon my dead body. Oh, Laura! how it burns in my heart—how terrible is this hell-fire of shame! It eats up the marrow of my bones and devours my brain. Oh, my head, my head! how terrible is this pain!"

With a loud sob he sank back on the pillow; his eyes closed, great drops of sweat stood on his brow, and the breath seemed struggling in his breast.

Laura bowed over him, she wiped away the death-sweat with her hair, and hot tears fell on the poor wan face. These tears aroused him—he opened his eyes.

"I have got something to say," whispered he; "I feel that I shall soon be well. When the world says of me, 'He is dead,' I shall have just awaked from death. There above begins the true life; what is here so called is only a pitiful prologue. We live here only that we may learn to wish for death. Oh, my Laura! I shall soon live, love, and be happy."

"Oh, take me with you, my beloved," cried Laura, kneeling before him, dissolved in tears. "Leave me not alone—it is so sad, so solitary in this cold world! Take me with you, my beloved!"

He heard her not! Death had already touched him with the point of his dark wings, and spread his mantle over him. His spirit struggled with the exhausted body and panted to escape. He no longer heard when Laura called, but he still lived: his eyes were wide open and he spoke again. But they were single, disconnected words, which belonged to the dreamland and the forms of the invisible world which his almost disembodied spirit now looked upon.

Once he said, in a loud voice, and this time he looked with full consciousness upon Laura, "I close my life—a life of sorrow. Winterfeldt has shortened my days, but I die content in knowing that so bad, so dangerous a man is no longer in the army." *

His mind wandered, and he thought he was on the battle-field, and called out, loudly:

"Forward! forward to the death!"

Then all was still but the song of the birds and the sighing winds.

Laura knelt and prayed. When she turned her glance from the cloudless heavens upon her beloved, his countenance was changed. There was a glory about it, and his great, wide-opened eyes flashed with inspiration; he raised his dying head and greeted the trees and flowers with his last glance.

"How beautiful is the world when one is about to die," said he, with a sweet smile. "Farewell, world! Farewell, Laura! Come,

* The prince's own words. He died the 12th of June, 1758, at thirty-six years of age. As his adjutant, Von Hagen, brought the news of his death to the king, Frederick asked, "Of what disease did my brother die?" "Grief and shame shortened his life," said the officer. Frederick turned his back on him without a reply, and Von Hagen was never promoted.

The king erected a monument to Winterfeldt, Ziethen, and Schwerin, but he left it to his brother Henry to erect one to the Prince of Prussia. This was done in Reinenz, where a lofty pyramid was built in honor of the heroes of the Seven Years' War. The names of all the generals, and all the battles they had gained were engraven upon it, and it was crowned by a bust of Augustus William, the great-grandfather of the present King of Prussia.

The king erected a statue to Winterfeldt, and forgot his brother, and now Prince Henry forgot to place Winterfeldt's name among the heroes of the war. When the monument was completed, the prince made a speech, which was full of enthusiastic praise of his beloved brother, so early numbered with the dead. Prince Henry betrayed by insinuation the strifes and difficulties which always reigned between the king and himself; he did not allude to the king during his speech, and did not class him among the heroes of the Seven Years' War.

In speaking of the necessity of a monument in memory of his best beloved brother, Augustus William, he alluded to the statue of Winterfeldt, and added: "L'abus des richesses et du pouvoir élève des statues de marbre et de bronze à ceux qui n'étaient pas dignes de passer à la postérité sous l'emblême de l'honneur."—Rouille's "Vie du Prince Henry."

Recently a signal honor has been shown to Prince Augustus William, his statue has the principal place on the monument erected in honor of Frederick the Great in Berlin.—Rouille.

take me in your arms—let me die in the arms of love! Hate has its reign in this world, but love goes down with us into the cold grave. Farewell!—farewell!—farewell!"

His head fell upon Laura's shoulder; one last gasp, one last shudder, and the heir of a throne, the future ruler of millions, was nothing but a corpse.

The trees whispered gayly—no cloud shadowed the blue heavens; the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, and yet in that eventful moment a prince was born, a pardoned soul was wafted to the skies.

Love pressed the last kiss upon the poor, wan lips; love closed the weary eyes; love wept over him; love prayed for his soul.

"Hate has her reign in this poor world, love goes down with us into the dark tomb."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE KING AND HIS OLD AND NEW ENEMIES.

THREE years, three long, terrible years had passed since the beginning of this fearful war; since King Frederick of Prussia had stood alone, without any ally but distant England, opposed by all Europe.

These three years had somewhat undeceived the proud and self-confident enemies of Frederick. The pope still called him the Marquis of Brandenburg, and the German emperor declared that, notwithstanding the adverse circumstances threatening him on every side, the King of Prussia was still a brave and undaunted adversary. His enemies, after having for a long time declared that they would extinguish him and reduce him once more to the rank of the little Prince-Elector of Brandenburg, now began to fear him. From every battle, from every effort, from every defeat, King Frederick rose up with a clear brow and flashing eye, and unshaken courage. Even the lost battles did not cast a shadow upon the lustre of his victories. In both the one and the other he had shown himself a hero, greater even after the battles in his composure and decision, in his unconquerable energy, in the circumspection and presence of mind by which he grasped at a glance all the surroundings, and converted the most threatening into favorable circumstances. After a great victory his enemies might indeed say they had conquered the King of Prussia, but never that they had subdued him. He stood ever undaunted, ever ready for the contest, prepared to attack them when they least expected it; to take advantage of every weak point, and to profit by every incautious movement. The fallen ranks of his brave soldiers appeared to be dragons' teeth, which produced armed warriors.

In the camps of the allied Austrians, Saxons, and Russians hunger and sickness prevailed. In Vienna, Petersburg, and Dresden, the costs and burden of the war were felt to be almost insupportable. The Prussian army was healthy, their magazines well stocked, and, thanks to the English subsidy, the treasury seemed inexhaustible.

Three years, as we have said, of never-ceasing struggle had gone by. The heroic brow of the great Frederick had been wreathed with new laurels. The battles of Losovitz, of Rossbach, of Leuthen, and of Zorndorf were such dazzling victories that they were not even obscured by the defeats of Collin and Hochkirch. The allies made their shouts of victory resound throughout all Europe, and used every means to produce the impression upon the armies and the people that these victories were decisive.

Another fearful enemy, armed with words of Holy Writ, was now added to the list of those who had attacked him with the sword. This new adversary was Pope Clement XIII. He mounted the apostolic throne in May, 1758, and immediately declared himself the irreconcilable foe of the little Marquis of Brandenburg, who had dared to hold up throughout Prussia all superstition and bigotry to mockery and derision; who had illuminated the holy gloom and obscurity of the church with the clear light of reason and truth; who misused the priests and religious orders, and welcomed and assisted in Prussia all those whom the holy mother Catholic Church banished for heresies and unbelief.

Benedict, the predecessor of the present pope, was also known to have been the enemy of Frederick, but he was wise enough to be silent and not draw down upon the cloisters, and colleges, and Catholics of Prussia the rage of the king.

But Clement, in his fanatical zeal, was not satisfied to pursue this course. He was resolved to do battle against this heretical king. He fulminated the anathemas of the church and bitter imprecations against him, and showered down words of blessing and salvation upon all those who declared themselves his foes. Because of this fanatical hatred, Austria received a new honor, a new title from the hands of the pope. As a reward for her enmity to this atheistical marquis, and the great service which she had rendered in this war, the pope bestowed the title of apostolic majesty upon the empress and her successors. Not only the royal house of Austria, but the generals and the whole army of pious and believing Christians, should know and feel that the blessing of the pope rested upon their arms, protecting them from adversity and defeat. The glorious victory of Hochkirch must be solemnly celebrated, and the armies of the allies incited to more daring deeds of arms.

For this reason, Pope Clement sent to Field-Marshal Daun, who had commanded at the battle of Hochkirch, a consecrated hat and sword, thus changing this political into a religious war. It was no longer a question of earthly possessions, but a holy contest against an heretical enemy of mother church. Up to this time, these conse-

crated gifts had been only bestowed upon generals who had already subdued unbelievers or subjugated barbarians.*

But King Frederick of Prussia laughed at these attacks of God's vicegerent. To his enemies, armed with the sword, he opposed his own glittering blade; to his popish enemy, armed with the tongue and the pen, he opposed the same weapons. He met the first in the open field, the last in winter quarters, through those biting, mocking, keen *Fliegenden Blättern*, which at that time made all Europe roar with laughter, and crushed and brought to nothing the great deeds of the pope by the curse of ridicule.

The consecrated hat and sword of Field-Marshal Daun lost its value through the letter of thanks from Daun to the pope, which the king intercepted, and which, even in Austria, was laughed at and made sport of.

The congratulatory letter of the Princess Soubise to Daun was also made public, and produced general merriment.

When the pope called Frederick the "heretical Marchese di Brandenburgo," the king returned the compliment by calling him the "Grand Lama," and delighted himself over the assumed infallibility of the vicegerent of the Most High.

But the king not only scourged the pope with his satirical pen—the modest and prudish Empress Maria Theresa was also the victim of his wit. He wrote a letter, supposed to be from the Marquise de Pompadour to the Queen of Hungary, in which the inexplicable friendship between the virtuous empress and the luxurious mistress of Louis was mischievously portrayed. This letter of Frederick's was spread abroad in every direction, and people were not only *naïve* enough to read it, but to believe it genuine. The Austrian court saw itself forced to the public declaration that all these letters were false; that Field-Marshal Daun had not received a consecrated wig, but a hat; and that the empress had never received a letter of this character fom the Marquise de Pompadour.†

These *Fliegende Blättern*, as we have said, were the weapons with which King Frederick fought against his enemies when the rough, inclement winter made it impossible for him to meet them in the open field. In the winter quarters in 1758 most of those letters appeared; and no one but the Marquis d'Argens, the most faith-

* Œuvres Posthumes, vol. iii.

† In this letter the marquise complained bitterly that the empress had made it impossible for her to hasten to Vienna and offer her the homage, the love, the friendship she cherished for her in her heart. The empress had established a court of virtue and modesty in Vienna, and this tribunal could hardly receive the Pompadour graciously. The marquise, therefore, entreated the empress to execute judgment against this fearful tribunal of virtue, and to bow to the yoke of the omnipotent goddess Venus. All these letters can be seen in the "Supplément aux Œuvres Posthumes."

ful friend of Frederick, guessed who was the author of these hated and feared satires.

The enemies of the king also made use of this winter rest to make every possible aggression; they had their acquaintances and spies throughout Germany; under various pretences and disguises, they were scattered abroad—even in the highest court circles of Berlin they were zealously at work. By flattery, and bribery, and glittering promises, they made friends and adherents, and in the capital of Prussia they found ready supporters and informers. They were not satisfied with this—they were haughty and bold enough to seek for allies among the Prussians, and hoped to obtain entrance into the walls of the cities, and possession of the fortresses by treachery.

The Austrian and Russian prisoners confined in the fortress of Küstrin conspired to give it up to the enemy. The number of Russian prisoners sent to the fortress of Küstrin after the battle of Zorndorf, was twice as numerous as the garrison, and if they could succeed in getting possession of the hundred cannon captured at Zorndorf, and placed as victorious trophies in the market-place, it would be an easy thing to fall upon and overcome the garrison.

This plan was all arranged, and about to be carried out, but it was discovered the day before its completion. The Prussian commander doubled the guard before the casemates in which three thousand Russian prisoners were confined, and arrested the Russian officers. Their leader, Lieutenant von Yäden of Courland, was accused, condemned by the court-martial, and, by the express command of the king, broken upon the wheel. Even this terrible example bore little fruit. Ever new attempts were being made—ever new conspiracies discovered amongst the prisoners; and whilst the armies of the allies were attacking Prussia outwardly, the prisoners were carrying on a not less dangerous guerilla war—the more to be feared because it was secret—not in the open field and by day, but under the shadow of night and the veil of conspiracy.

Nowhere was this warfare carried on more vigorously than in Berlin. All the French taken at Rossbach, all the Austrians captured at Leuthen, and the Russian officers of high rank taken at Zorndorf, had been sent by the king to Berlin. They had the most enlarged liberty; the whole city was their prison, and only their word of honor bound them not to leave the walls of Berlin. Besides this, all were zealous to alleviate the sorrows of the "poor captives," and by *fêtes* and genial amusements to make them forget their captivity. The doors of all the first houses were opened to the distinguished strangers—everywhere they were welcome guests, and there was no assembly at the palace to which they were not invited.

Even in these fearful times, balls and *fêtes* were given at the

court. Anxious and sad faces were hidden under gay masks, and the loud sound of music and dancing drowned the heavy sighs of the desponding. While the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians strove with each other on the bloody battle-field, the Berlin ladies danced the graceful *Parisienne* dances with the noble prisoners. This was now the *mode*.

Truly there were many aching hearts in this gay and merry city, but they hid their grief and tears in their quiet, lonely chambers, and their clouded brows cast no shadow upon the laughing, rosy faces of the beautiful women whose brothers, husbands, and lovers, were far away on the bloody battle-field. If not exactly willing to accept these strangers as substitutes, they were at least glad to seek distraction in their society. After all, it is impossible to be always mourning, always complaining, always leading a cloistered life. In the beginning, the oath of constancy and remembrance, which all had sworn at parting, had been religiously preserved, and Berlin had the physiognomy of a lovely, interesting, but dejected widow, who knew and wished to know nothing of the joys of life. But suddenly Nature had asserted her own inexorable laws, which teach forgetfulness and inspire hope. The bitterest tears were dried—the heaviest sighs suppressed; people had learned to reconcile themselves to life, and to snatch eagerly at every ray of sunshine which could illumine the cold, hopeless desert, which surrounded them. They had seen that it was quite possible to live comfortably, even while wild war was blustering and raging without—that weak, frail human nature, refused to be ever strained, ever excited, in the expectation of great events. In the course of these three fearful years, even the saddest had learned again to laugh, jest, and be gay, in spite of death and defeat. They loved their fatherland—they shouted loudly and joyfully over the great victories of their king—they grieved sincerely over his defeats; but they could not carry their animosities so far as to be cold and strange to the captive officers who were compelled by the chances of war to remain in Berlin. They had so long striven not to seek to revenge themselves upon these powerless captives, that they had at last truly forgotten they were enemies; and these handsome, entertaining, captivating, gallant gentlemen were no longer looked upon even as prisoners, but as strangers and travellers, and therefore they should receive the honors of the city.*

The king commanded that these officers should receive all attention. It was also the imperative will of the king that court balls should be given; he wished to prove to the world that his family were neither sad nor dispirited, but gay, bold, and hopeful.

* Sulzer writes: "The prisoners of war are treated here as if they were distinguished travellers and visitors."

CHAPTER II.

THE THREE OFFICERS.

It was the spring of 1759. Winter quarters were broken up, and it was said the king had left Breslau and advanced boldly to meet the enemy. The Berlin journals contained accounts of combats and skirmishes which had taken place here and there between the Prussians and the allies, and in which, it appeared, the Prussians had always been unfortunate.

Three captive officers sat in an elegant room of a house near the castle, and conversed upon the news of the day, and stared at the morning journals which lay before them on the table.

"I beg you," said one of them in French—"I beg you will have the goodness to translate this sentence for me. I think it has relation to Prince Henry, but I find it impossible to decipher this barbarous dialect." He handed the journal to his neighbor, and pointed with his finger to the paragraph.

"Yes, there is something about Prince Henry," said the other, with a peculiar accent which betrayed the Russian; "and something, Monsieur Belleville, which will greatly interest you."

"Oh, I beseech you to read it to us," said the Frenchman, somewhat impatiently; then, turning graciously to the third gentleman who sat silent and indifferent near him, he added: "We must first ascertain, however, if our kind host, Monsieur le Comte di Ranuzi, consents to the reading."

"I gladly take part," said the Italian count, "in any thing that is interesting; above all, in every thing which has no relation to this wearisome and stupid Berlin."

"*Vraiment!* you are right," sighed the Frenchman. "It is a dreary and ceremonious region. They are so inexpressibly prudish and virtuous—so filled with old-fashioned scruples—led captive by such little prejudices—that I should be greatly amused at it, if I did not suffer daily from the dead monotony it brings. What would the enchanting mistress of France—what would the Marquise de Pompadour say, if she could see *me*, the gay, witty, merry Belleville, conversing with such an aspect of pious gravity with this poor Queen of Prussia, who makes a face if one alludes to La Pucelle d'Orléans, and wishes to make it appear that she has not read Crébillon!"

"Tell me, now, Giurgenow, how is it with your court of Petersburg? Is it as formal, as ceremonious as here in Prussia?"

Giurgenow laughed aloud. "Our Empress Elizabeth is an angel

of beauty and goodness—mild and magnanimous to all—sacrificing herself constantly to the good of others. Last year she gave a ball to her body-guard. She danced with every one of the soldiers, and sipped from every glass; and when the soldiers, carried away by her grace and favor, dared to indulge in somewhat free jests, the good empress laughed merrily, and forgave them. On that auspicious day she first turned her attention to the happy Bestuchef. He was then a poor subordinate officer—now he is a prince and one of the richest men in Russia."

"It appears that your Russia has some resemblance to my beautiful France," said Belleville, gayly. "But how is it with you, Count Ranuzi? Is the Austrian court like the court of France, or like this wearisome Prussia?"

"The Austrian court stands alone—resembles no other," said the Italian, proudly. "At the Austrian court we have a tribunal of justice to decide all charges against modesty and virtue. The Empress Maria Theresa is its president."

"*Diable!*" cried the Frenchman, "what earthly chance would the Russian empress and my lovely, enchanting marquise have, if summoned before this tribunal by their most august ally the Empress Maria Theresa? But you forget, Giurgenow, that you have promised to read us something from the journal about Prince Henry."

"It is nothing of importance," said the Russian, apathetically; "the prince has entirely recovered from his wounds, and has been solacing himself in his winter camp at Dresden with the representations upon the French stage. He has taken part as actor, and has played the *rôle* of Voltaire's *Enfant Prodigue*. It is further written, that he has now left the comic stage and commenced the graver game of arms."

"He might accidentally change these *rôles*," said Belleville, gayly, "and play the *Enfant Prodigue* when he should play the hero. In which would he be the greater, do you know, Ranuzi?"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders. "You must ask his wife."

"Or Baron Kalkreuth, who has lingered here for seven months because of his wounds," said Giurgenow, with a loud laugh. "Besides, Prince Henry is averse to this war; all his sympathies are on our side. If the fate of war should cost the King of Prussia his life, we would soon have peace and leave this detestable Berlin—this dead, sandy desert, where we are now languishing as prisoners."

"The god of war is not always complaisant," said the Frenchman, grimly. "He does not always strike those whom we would gladly see fall; the balls often go wide of the mark."

"Truly a dagger is more reliable," said Ranuzi, coolly.

The Russian cast a quick, lowering side glance upon him.

"Not always sure," said he. "It is said that men armed with daggers have twice found their way into the Prussian camp, and been caught in the king's tent. Their daggers have been as little fatal to the king as the cannon-balls."

"Those who bore the daggers were Dutchmen," said Ranuzi, apathetically; "they do not understand this sort of work. One must learn to handle the dagger in my fatherland."

"Have you learned?" said Giurgenow, sharply.

"I have learned a little of every thing. I am a *dilettanti* in all."

"But you are master in the art of love," said Belleville, smiling. "Much is said of your love-affairs, monsieur."

"Much is said that is untrue," said the Italian, quietly. "I love no intrigues—least of all, love intrigues; while you, sir, are known as a veritable Don Juan. I learn that you are fatally in love with the beautiful maid of honor of the Princess Henry."

"Ah, you mean the lovely Fraulein von Marshal," said Giurgenow; "I have also heard this, and I admire the taste and envy the good fortune of Belleville."

"It is, indeed, true," said Belleville; "the little one is pretty, and I divert myself by making love to her. It is our duty to teach these little Dutch girls, once for all, what true gallantry is."

"And is that your only reason for paying court to this beautiful girl?" said Giurgenow, frowningly.

"The only reason, I assure you," cried Belleville, rising up, and drawing near the window. "But, look," cried he, hastily; "what a crowd of men are filling the streets, and how the people are crying and gesticulating, as if some great misfortune had fallen upon them!"

The two officers hastened to his side and threw open the window. A great crowd of people was indeed assembled in the platz, and they were still rushing from the neighboring streets into the wide, open square, in the middle of which, upon a few large stones, a curious group were exhibiting themselves.

There stood a tall, thin man, enveloped in a sort of black robe; his long gray hair fell in wild locks around his pallid and fanatical countenance. In his right hand he held a bible, which he waved aloft to the people, while his large, deeply-set, hollow eyes were raised to heaven, and his pale lips murmured light and unintelligible words. By his side stood a woman, also in black, with dishevelled hair floating down her back. Her face was colorless; she looked like a corpse, and her thin, blue lips were pressed together as if in death. There was life in her eyes—a gloomy, wild, fanatical fire flashed from them. Her glance was glaring and uncertain, like

a will-o'-the-wisp, and filled those upon whom it fell with a shivering, mysterious feeling of dread.

And now, as if by accident, she looked to the windows where the three gentlemen were standing. The shadow of a smile passed over her face, and she bowed her head almost imperceptibly. No one regarded this; no one saw that Giurgenow answered this greeting, and smiled back significantly upon this enigmatical woman.

"Do you know what this means, gentlemen?" said Belleville.

"It means," said Giurgenow, "that the people will learn from their great prophet something of the continuance, or rather of the conclusion of this war. These good, simple people, as it seems to me, long for rest, and wish to know when they may hope to attain it. That man knows, for he is a great prophet, and all his prophecies are fulfilled."

"But you forget to make mention of the woman?" said Ranuzi, with a peculiar smile.

"The woman is, I think, a fortune-teller with cards, and the Princess Amelia holds her in great respect; but let us listen to what the prophet says."

They were silent, and listened anxiously. And now the voice of the prophet raised itself high above the silent crowd. Pealing and sounding through the air, it fell in trumpet-tones upon the ear, and not one word escaped the eager and attentive people.

"Brothers," cried the prophet, "why do you interrupt me? Why do you disturb me, in my quiet, peaceful path—me and this innocent woman, who stood by my side last night, to read the dark stars, and whose soul is sad, even as my own, at what we have seen."

"What did you see?" cried a voice from the crowd.

"Pale, ghostly shadows, who, in bloody garments, wandered here and there, weeping and wailing, seating themselves upon a thousand open graves, and singing out their plaintive hymns of lamentation. 'War! war!' they cried, 'woe to war! It kills our men, devours our youths, makes widows of our women, and nuns of our maidens. Woe, woe to war! Shriek out a prayer to God for peace—peace! O God, send us peace; close these open graves, heal our wounds, and let our great suffering cease!'"

The prophet folded his hands and looked to heaven, and now the woman's voice was heard.

"But the heavens were dark to the prayer of the spirits, and a blood-red stream gushed from them; colored the stars crimson, turned the moon to a lake of blood, and piteous voices cried out from the clouds, and in the air—'Fight on and die, for your king wills it so; your life belongs to him, your blood is his.' Then, from two rivulets of blood, giant-like, pale, transparent forms

emerged; upon the head of the first, I read the number, '1759.' Then the pale form opened its lips, and cried out: 'I bring war, and ever-new bloodshed. Your king demands the blood of your sons; give it to him. He demands your gold; give it to him. The king is lord of your body, your blood, and your soul. When he speaks, you must obey!'"

"It seems to me all this is a little too Russian in its conception," said Ranuzi, half aloud. "I shall be surprised if the police do not interrupt this *séance*, which smells a little of insurrection."

"The scene is so very piquant," said Giurgenow, "I would like to draw nearer. Pardon me, gentlemen, I must leave you, and go upon the square. It is interesting to hear what the people say, and how they receive such prophecies. We can, perhaps, judge in this way of the probabilities of peace and liberty. The voice of the people is, in politics, ever the decisive voice." He took his hat, and, bowing to the gentlemen, left the room hastily.

CHAPTER III.

RANUZI.

Count Ranuzi gazed after the Russian with a mocking smile.

"Do you know, Belleville, where he is going?"

"He has not told us, but I guess it. He is going to approach this fortune-teller, and give her a sign that her zeal has carried her too far, and that, if not more prudent, she will betray herself."

"You think, then, that Giurgenow knows the fortune-teller?"

"I am certain of it. He has engaged these charlatans to rouse up the people, and excite them against the king. This is, indeed, a very common mode of proceeding, and often successful; but here, in Prussia, it can bear no fruit. The people here have nothing to do with politics; the king reigns alone. The people are nothing but a mass of subjects, who obey implicitly his commands, even when they know, that in so doing, they rush on destruction."

"Giurgenow has failed, and he might have counted upon failure! If you, Belleville, had resorted to these means, I could have understood it. In France, the people play an important *rôle* in politics. In order to put down the government, you must work upon the people. You might have been forgiven for this attempt, but Giurgenow never!"

"You believe, then, that he is manœuvring here, in Berlin, in the interest of his government?" said Belleville, amazed.

Ranuzi laughed heartily.

"That is a fine and diplomatic mode of expressing the thing!" said he. "Yes, he is here in the interest of his government; but when the Prussian government becomes acquainted with this fact, they will consider him a spy. If discovered, he will be hung. If successful, when once more at liberty, he may receive thanks and rewards from Russia. See, now, how rightly I have prophesied! There is Giurgenow, standing by the side of the prophetess, and I imagine I almost hear the words he is whispering to her. She will commence again to prophesy, but in a less violent and fanatical manner."

"No, no; she will prophesy no more! The police are breaking their way forcibly through the crowd. They do not regard the cries of fear and suffering of those they are shoving so violently aside. These are the servants of the police; they will speedily put an end to this prophesying. Already the people are flying. Look how adroitly Giurgenow slips away, and does not condescend to give a glance to the poor prophetess he inspired. Only see how little respect these rough policemen have for these heaven-inspired prophets! They seize them rudely, and bear them off. They will be punished with, at least, twenty-four hours' arrest. In Prussia, this concourse and tumult of the people is not allowed. Come, monsieur, let us close the window; the comedy is over. The prophets are in the watch-house. Their *rôle* is probably forever played out!" said Belleville, smilingly.

"Not so; they will recommence it to-morrow. These same prophets have high and mighty protectors in Berlin; the police will not dare to keep them long under arrest. The Princess Amelia will demand her fortune-teller."

"*Vraiment*, monsieur le comte," said the Frenchman, "you seem extraordinarily well acquainted with all these intrigues?"

"I observe closely," said Ranuzi, with a meaning smile. "I am very silent—therefore hear a great deal."

"Well, I counsel you not to give to me or my actions the honor of your observations," said Belleville. "My life offers few opportunities for discovery. I live, I eat, I sleep, I chat, and write poetry, and caress, and seek to amuse myself as well as possible. Sometimes I catch myself praying to God tearfully for liberty, and truly, not from any political considerations—simply from the selfish wish to get away from here. You see, therefore, I am an innocent and harmless *bon enfant*, not in the least troubled about public affairs."

"No," said Ranuzi, "you do not love Fraulein Marshal at all from political reasons, but solely because of her beauty, her grace, and her charms. Behold, this is the result of my observations."

"You have, then, been watching me?" said Belleville, blushing.

"I have told you that I was always observant. This is here my only distraction and recreation, and really I do not know what I should do with my time if I did not kill the weary hours in this way."

"You do employ it sometimes to a better purpose?" said the Frenchman, in low tones. "Love is still for you a more agreeable diversion, and you understand the game well."

"It appears you are also an observer," said Ranuzi, with an ironical smile. "Well, then, I do find love a sweeter diversion; and if I should yield myself up entirely to my love-dreams, I would perhaps be less observant. But, Belleville, why do you take your hat? Will you also leave me?"

"I must, perforce. Through our agreeable conversation I had entirely forgotten that I had promised Fraulein Marshal to ride with her. A cavalier must keep his promise with a lady, at least till he knows she is ardently in love with him." He gave his hand to the duke, and as he left the room he hummed a light French *chanson.*

Ranuzi looked after him with a long, frowning glance. "Poor fool," murmured he, "he believes he plays his part so well that he deceives even me. This mask of folly and levity he has assumed is thin and transparent enough—I see his true face behind it. It is the physiognomy of a sly *intriguant.* Oh, I know him thoroughly; I understand every emotion of his heart, and I know well what his passion for the beautiful Marshal signifies. She is the maid of honor of the Princess Henry—this is the secret of his love. She is the confidante of the princess, who receives every week long and confidential letters from the tent of her tender husband. Fraulein Marshal is naturally acquainted with their contents. The prince certainly speaks in these letters of his love and devotion, but also a little of the king's plans of battle. Fraulein von Marshal knows all this. If Belleville obtains her love and confidence, he will receive pretty correct information of what goes on in the tent of the king and in the camp councils. So Belleville will have most important dispatches to forward to his Marquise de Pompadour—dispatches for which he will be one day rewarded with honor and fortune. This is the Frenchman's plan! I see through him as I do through the Russian. They are both paid spies—informers of their governments—nothing more. They will be paid, or they will be hung, according as accident is favorable or unfavorable to them." Ranuzi was silent, and walked hastily backward and forward in the room. Upon his high, pale brow dark thoughts were written, and flashes of anger flamed from his eyes.

"And I," said he, after a long pause, "am I in any respect better than they? Will not the day come when I also will be considered

as a purchased spy? a miserable informer? and my name branded with this title? No, no; away with this dark spectre, which floats like a black cloud between me and my purpose! My aim is heaven; and what I do, I do in the name of the Church—in the service of this great, exalted Church, whose servant and priest I am. No, no; the world will not call me a spy, will not brand my name with shame. God will bless my efforts as the Holy Father in Rome has blessed them, and I shall reach the goal."

Ranuzi was brilliantly handsome in this inspired mood; his noble and characteristic face seemed illuminated and as beautiful as the angel of darkness, when surrounded by a halo of heavenly light.

"It is an exalted and great aim which I have set before me," said he, after another pause; "a work which the Holy Father himself confided to me. I must and I will accomplish it to the honor of God and the Holy Madonna. This blasphemous war must end; this atheistical and free-thinking king must be reduced, humbled, and cast down from the stage he has mounted with such ostentatious bravado. Silesia must be torn from the hands of this profligate robber and incorporated in the crown of our apostolic majesty of Austria. The holy Church dare not lose any of her provinces, and Silesia will be lost if it remains in the hands of this heretical king; he must be punished for his insolence and scoffing, for having dared to oppose himself to the Holy Father at Rome. The injuries which he heaped upon the Queen of Poland must be avenged, and I will not rest till he is so humbled, so crushed, as to sue for a shameful peace, even as Henry the Fourth, clad like a peasant, pleaded to Canoza. But the means, the means to attain this great object."

Hastily and silently he paced the room, his head proudly thrown back, and a cold, defiant glance directed upward.

"To kill him!" said he suddenly, as if answering the voices which whispered in his soul; "that would be an imbecile, miserable resort, and, moreover, we would not obtain our object; he would not be humiliated, but a martyr's crown would be added to his laurels. When, however, he is completely humbled, when, to this great victory at Hochkirch, we add new triumphs, when we have taken Silesia and revenged Saxony, then he might die; then we will seek a sure hand which understands the dagger and its uses. Until then, silence and caution; until then this contest must be carried on with every weapon which wisdom and craft can place in our hands. I think my weapons are good and sharp, well fitted to give a telling thrust; and yet they are so simple, so threadbare—a cunning fortune-teller, a love-sick fool, a noble coquette, and a poor prisoner! these are my only weapons, and with these I will defeat the man whom his flatterers call the heroic King of Prussia."

He laughed aloud, but it was a ferocious, threatening laugh, which shocked himself.

"Down, down, ye evil spirits," said he; "do not press forward so boldly to my lips; they are consecrated now to soft words and tender sighs alone. Silence, ye demons! creep back into my heart, and there, from some dark corner, you can hear and see if my great *rôle* is well played. It is time! it is time! I must once more prove my weapons."

He stepped to the glass and looked thoughtfully at his face, examined his eyes, his lips, to see if they betrayed the dark passions of his soul; then arranged his dark hair in soft, wavy lines over his brow; he rang for his servant, put on his Austrian uniform, and buckled on the sword. The king had been gracious enough to allow the captive officers in Berlin to wear their swords, only requiring their word of honor that they would never use them again in this war. When Count Ranuzi, the captive Austrian captain, had completed his toilet, he took his hat and entered the street. Ranuzi had now assumed a careless, indifferent expression; he greeted the acquaintances who met him with a friendly smile, uttering to each a few kindly words or gay jests. He reached, at last, a small and insignificant house in the Frederick Street, opened the door which was only slightly closed, and entered the hall; at the same moment a side door opened, and a lady sprang forward, with extended arms, to meet the count.

"Oh, my angel," said she, in that soft Italian tongue, so well suited to clothe love's trembling sighs in words—"oh, my angel, are you here at last? I saw your noble, handsome face, from my window; it seemed to me that my room was illuminated with glorious sunshine, and my heart and soul were warmed."

Ranuzi made no answer to these glowing words, silently he suffered himself to be led forward by the lady, then replied to her ardent assurances by a few cool, friendly words.

"You are alone to-day, Marietta," said he, "and your husband will not interrupt our conversation."

"My husband!" said she, reproachfully, "Taliazuchi is not my husband. I despise him; I know nothing of him; I am even willing that he should know I adore you."

"Oh woman, woman!" said Ranuzi, laughing; "how treacherous, how dangerous you are! When you love happily, you are like the anaconda, whose poisonous bite one need not fear, when it is well fed and tended; but when you have ceased to love, you are like the tigress who, rashly awaked from sleep, would strangle the unfortunate who disturbed her repose. Come, my anaconda, come; if you are satisfied with my love, let us talk and dream." He drew

her tenderly toward him, and, kissing her fondly, seated her by his side; but Marietta glided softly to his feet.

"Let it be so," she said; "let me lie at your feet; let me adore you, and read in your face the history of these last three terrible days, in which I have not seen you. Where were you, Carlo? why have you forgotten me?"

"Ah," said he, laughing, "my anaconda begins to hunger for my heart's blood! how long before she will be ready to devour or to murder me?"

"Do not call me your anaconda," she said, shaking her head; "you say that, when we are satisfied with your love, we are like the sleeping anaconda. But, Carlo, when I look upon you, I thirst for your glances, your sweet words, your assurances of love. And has it not been thus all my life long? Have I not loved you since I was capable of thought and feeling? Oh, do you remember our happy, glorious childhood, Carlo? those days of sunshine, of fragrance, of flowers, of childish innocence? Do you remember how often we have wandered hand in hand through the Campagna, talking of God, of the stars, and of the flowers?—dreaming of the time in which the angels and the stars would float down into our hearts, and change the world into a paradise for us?"

"Ah! we had a bitter awaking from these fair dreams," said Ranuzi, thoughtfully. "My father placed me in a Jesuit college; your mother sent you to a cloister, that the nuns might make of you a public singer. We had both our own career to make, Marietta; you upon the stage, I on the confessor's stool. We were the poor children of poor parents, and every path was closed to us but one, the church and the stage; our wise parents knew this."

"And they separated us," sighed Marietta; "they crushed out the first modest flame of our young, pure hearts, and made us an example of their greed! Ah, Carlo; you can never know how much I suffered, how bitterly I wept on your account. I was only twelve years old, but I loved you with all the strength and ardor of a woman, and longed after you as after a lost paradise. The nuns taught me to sing; and when my clear, rich voice pealed through the church halls, no one knew that not God's image, but yours, was in my heart; that I was worshipping you with my hymns of praise and pious fervor. I knew that we were forever separated, could never belong to each other, so I prayed to God to lend swift wings to time, that we might become independent and free, I as a singer and you as my honored confessor."

Ranuzi laughed merrily. "But fate was unpropitious," said he. "The pious fathers discovered that I had too little eloquence to make a good priest; in short, that I was better fitted to serve holy mother

Church upon the battle-field. When I was a man and sufficiently learned, they obtained a commission for me as officer in the Pope's body-guard, and I exchanged the black robe of my order for the gold-embroidered uniform."

"And you forgot me, Carlo? you did not let me know where you were? Five years after, when I was engaged in Florence as a singer, I learned what had become of you. I loved you always, Carlo; but what hope had I ever to tell you so? we were so far away from each other, and poverty separated us so widely. I must first become rich, you must make your career. Only then might we hope to belong to each other. I waited and was silent."

"You waited and were silent till you forgot me," said Ranuzi, playing carelessly with her long, soft curls; "and, having forgotten me, you discovered that Signor Taliazuchi was a tolerably pretty fellow, whom it was quite possible to love."

"Taliazuchi understood how to flatter my vanity," said she, gloomily; "he wrote beautiful and glowing poems in my praise, which were printed and read not only in Florence, but throughout all Italy. When he declared his love and pleaded for my hand, I thought, if I refused him, he would persecute me and hate me; that mockery and ridicule would take the place of the enthusiastic hymns in my praise, with which Italy then resounded. I was too ambitious to submit to this, and had not the courage to refuse him, so I became his wife, and in becoming so, I abhorred him, and I swore to make him atone for having forced me to become so."

"But this force consisted only in hymns of praise and favorable criticisms," said Ranuzi, quietly.

"I have kept my oath," said Marietta; "I have made him atone for what he has done, and I have often thought that, when afterward compelled to write poems in my favor, he cursed me in his heart; he would gladly have crushed me by his criticisms, but that my fame was a fountain of gold for him, which he dared not exhaust or dry up. But my voice had been injured by too much straining, and a veil soon fell upon it. I could but regard it as great good fortune when Count Algarotti proposed to me to take the second place as singer in Berlin; this promised to be more profitable, as the count carelessly offered Taliazuchi a place in the opera troupe as writer. So I left my beautiful Italy; I left you to amass gold in this cold north. And now, I no longer repent; I rejoice! I have found you again—you, the beloved of my youth—you, my youth itself. Oh, Heaven! never will I forget the day when I saw you passing. I knew you in spite of the uniform, in spite of the many years which had passed since we met. I knew you; and not my lips only, but my heart, uttered that loud cry which caused you to look up, my

Carlo. And now you recognized me and stretched your hands out to me, and I would have sprung to you from the window, had not Taliazuchi held me back. I cried out, 'It is Ranuzi! it is Carlo! I must, I will fly to him,' when the door opened and you entered and I saw you, my own beloved; I heard your dear voice, and never did one of God's poor creatures fall into a happier insensibility than I in that rapturous moment."

"And Taliazuchi stood by and smiled!" said Ranuzi, laughing; "it was truly a pretty scene for an opera writer. He, no doubt, thought so, and wished to take note of it, as he left the room when you awaked to consciousness."

"Since that time, I am only awake when in your presence," said Marietta, passionately. "When you are not near me, I sleep. You are the sun which rouses me to life. When you leave me, it is night—dark night, and dark, gloomy thoughts steal over me."

"What thoughts, Marietta?" said he, placing his hand under her chin, and raising her head gently.

She looked up at him with a curious, dreamy smile, but was silent.

"Well, what thoughts have you when I am not with you?" he repeated.

"I think it possible a day may come in which you will cease to love me."

"And you think you will then fly to Taliazuchi for consolation?" said Ranuzi, laughing.

"No; I think, or rather I fear that I will revenge myself; that I will take vengeance on you for your unfaithfulness."

"Ah! my tigress threatens!" cried Ranuzi. "Now, Marietta, you know well that I shall never cease to love you, but a day will come when we will be forced to separate."

She sprang up with a wild cry, and clasped him stormily in her arms.

"No, no!" she cried, trembling and weeping; "no man shall dare to tear you from me! We will never be separated!"

"You think, then, that I am not only your prisoner for life, but also the eternal prisoner of the King of Prussia?"

"No, no! you shall be free—free! but Marietta will also be free, and by your side. When you leave Berlin, I go with you; no power can bind me here. Taliazuchi will not seek me, if I leave him my little fortune. I will do that; I will take nothing with me. Poor, without fortune or possessions, I will follow you, Ranuzi. I desire nothing, I hope for nothing, but to be by your side."

She clasped him in her arms, and did not remark the dark cloud which shadowed his brow, but this vanished quickly, and his countenance assumed a kind and clear expression.

"It shall be so, Marietta! Freedom shall unite us both eternally, death only shall separate us! But when may we hope for this great, this glorious, this beautiful hour? When will the blessed day dawn in which I can take your hand and say to you, 'Come, Marietta, come; the world belongs to us and our love. Let us fly and enjoy our happiness.' Oh, beloved, if you truly love me, help me to snatch this happy day from fate! Stand by me with your love, that I may attain my freedom."

"Tell me what I can do, and it is done," said she resolutely; "there is nothing I will not undertake and dare for you."

Ranuzi took her small head in his hands and gazed long and smilingly into her glowing face.

"Are you sure of yourself?" said he.

"I am sure. Tell me, Carlo, what I must do, and it is done."

"And if it is dangerous, Marietta?"

"I know but one danger."

"What is that?"

"To lose your love, Carlo!"

"Then this world has no danger for you, Marietta!"

"Speak, Carlo, speak! How can I aid you? What can I do to obtain your liberty?"

Ranuzi threw a quick and searching glance around the room, as if to convince himself that they were alone, then bowed down close to her ear and whispered:

"I can never be free till the King of Prussia is completely conquered and subjected, and only if I bring all my strength and capabilities to this object, may I hope to be free, and rich, and honored. The King of Prussia is my enemy, he is the enemy of the Church, the enemy of my gracious sovereign of Austria, to whom I have sworn fealty. A man may strive to conquer his enemies with every weapon, even with craft. Will you stand by me in this?"

"I will."

"Then observe and listen, and search all around you. Repeat to me all that you hear and see—seem to be an enthusiastic adherent of the King of Prussia; you will then be confided in and know all that is taking place. Be kind and sympathetic to your husband; he is a sincere follower of the king, and has free intercourse with many distinguished persons; he is also well received at court. Give yourself the appearance of sympathizing in all his sentiments. When you attend the concerts at the castle, observe all that passes —every laugh, every glance, every indistinct word, and inform me of all. Do you understand, Marietta?—will you do this?"

"I understand, Carlo, and I will do this. Is this all? Can I do nothing more to help you?"

"Yes, there are other things, but they are more difficult, more dangerous."

"So much the better; the more dangerous the stronger the proof of my love. Speak, dear Carlo!"

"It is forbidden for the captive officers to send sealed letters to their friends or relatives. All our letters must be read, and if a word of politics is found in them, they are condemned. All other persons have the right to send sealed letters in every direction. Have you not friends to whom you write, Marietta?"

"I have, and from this time onward your friends will be mine, and I will correspond with them."

As she said this, with a roguish smile, a ray of joy lighted up Ranuzi's eyes.

"You understand me, my beloved; your intellect is as clear and sharp as your heart is warm and noble. Think well what you do—what danger threatens you. I tell you plainly, Marietta, this is no question of common friendly letters, but of the most earnest, grave, important interests!"

She bowed to his ear and whispered: "All that you espy in Berlin you will confide to these letters; you will concert with your friends, you will design plans, perhaps make conspiracies. I will address these letters and take them to the post, and no one will mistrust me, for my letters will be addressed to some friends in Vienna, or to whom you will. Have I understood you, Carlo? Is this all right?"

He clasped her rapturously in his arms, and the words of tender gratitude which he expressed were not entirely wanting in sincerity and truth.

Marietta was proudly happy, and listened with sparkling eyes to his honeyed words.

As Ranuzi, however, after this long interview, arose to say farewell, she held him back. Laying her hands upon his shoulder, she looked at him with a curious expression, half laughing, half threatening.

"One last word, Carlo," she said; "I love you boundlessly. To prove my love to you, I become a traitress to this king, who has been a gracious master to me, whose bread I eat—who received and protects me. To prove my love, I become a spy, an informer. Men say this is dishonorable work, but for myself I feel proud and happy to undertake it for you, and not for all the riches and treasures of this world would I betray you. But, Carlo, if you ever cease to love me, if you deceive me and become unfaithful, as true as God helps me, I will betray both myself and you!"

"I believe truly she is capable of it," said Ranuzi, as he reached

the street; "she is a dangerous woman, and with her love and hate she is truly like a tigress. Well, I must be on my guard. If she rages I must draw her teeth, so that she cannot bite, or flee from her furious leaps. But this danger is in the distance, the principal thing is that I have opened a way to my correspondence, and that is immense progress in my plans, for which I might well show my gratitude to my tender Marietta by a few caresses."

CHAPTER IV.

LOUISE DU TROUFFLE.

Madame du Trouffle paced her room restlessly; she listened to every stroke of the clock, every sound made her tremble.

"He comes not! he comes not!" murmured she; "he received my irony of yesterday in earnest and is exasperated Alas! am I really an old woman? Have I no longer the power to enchain, to attract? Can it be that I am old and ugly? No, no! I am but thirty-four years of age—that is not old for a married woman, and as to being ugly—"

She interrupted herself, stepped hastily to the glass, and looked long and curiously at her face.

Yes, yes! she must confess her beauty was on the wane. She was more faded than her age would justify. Already was seen around her mouth those yellow, treacherous lines which vanished years imprint upon the face; already her brow was marked with light lines, and silver threads glimmered in her hair.

Louise du Trouffle sighed heavily.

"I was too early married, and then unhappily married; at eighteen I was a mother. All this ages a woman—not the years but the storms of life have marked these fearful lines in my face. Then it is not possible for a man to feel any warm interest in me when he sees a grown-up daughter by my side, who will soon be my rival, and strive with me for the homage of men. This is indeed exasperating. Oh, my God! my God! a day may come in which I may be jealous of my own daughter! May Heaven guard me from that! Grant that I may see her fresh and blooming beauty without rancor; that I may think more of her happiness than my vanity."

Then, as if she would strengthen her good resolutions, Louise left her room and hastened to the chamber of her daughter.

Camilla lay upon the divan—her slender and beauteous form was wrapped in soft white drapery; her shining, soft dark hair fell around her rosy face and over her naked shoulders, with whose ala-

baster whiteness it contrasted strongly. Camilla was reading, and so entirely was she occupied with her book that she did not hear her mother enter.

Louise drew softly near the divan, and stood still, lost in admiration at this lovely, enchanting picture, this reposing Hebe.

"Camilla," said she, fondly, "what are you reading so eagerly?"

Camilla started and looked up suddenly, then laughed aloud.

"Ah, mamma," said she, in a silver, clear, and soft voice, "how you frightened me! I thought it was my tyrannical governess already returned from her walk, and that she had surprised me with this book."

"Without doubt she forbade you to read it," said her mother, gravely, stretching out her hand for the book, but Camilla drew it back suddenly.

"Yes, certainly, Madame Brunnen forbade me to read this book; but that is no reason, mamma, why you should take it away from me. It is to be hoped you will not play the stern tyrant against your poor Camilla."

"I wish to know what you are reading, Camilla."

"Well, then, Voltaire's 'Pucelle d'Orléans,' and I assure you, mamma, I am extremely pleased with it."

"Madame Brunnen was right to forbid you to read this book, and I also forbid it."

"And if I refuse to obey, mamma?"

"I will force you to obedience," cried her mother, sternly.

"Did any one succeed in forcing you to obey your mother?" said Camilla, in a transport of rage. "Did your mother give her consent to your elopement with the garden-boy? You chose your own path in life, and I will choose mine. I will no longer bear to be treated as a child—I am thirteen years old; you were not older when you had the affair with the garden-boy, and were forced to confide yourself to my father. Why do you wish to treat me as a little child, and keep me in leading-strings, when I am a grown-up girl?"

"You are no grown-up girl, Camilla," cried her mother; "if you were, you would not dare to speak to your mother as you have done; you would know that it was unseemly, and that, above all other things, you should show reverence and obedience to your mother. No, Camilla, God be thanked! you are but a foolish child, and therefore I forgive you."

Louise drew near her daughter and tried to clasp her tenderly in her arms, but Camilla struggled roughly against it.

"You shall not call me a child," said she, rudely. "I will no longer bear it! it angers me! and if you repeat it, mamma, I will declare to every one that I am sixteen years old!"

"And why will you say that, Camilla?"

Camilla looked up with a cunning smile.

"Why?" she repeated, "ah! you think I do not know why I must always remain a child? It is because you wish to remain a young woman—therefore you declare to all the world that I am but twelve years old! But no one believes you, mamma, not one believes you. The world laughs at you, but you do not see it—you think you are younger when you call me a child. I say to you I will not endure it! I will be a lady—I will adorn myself and go into society. I will not remain in the school-room with a governess while you are sparkling in the saloon and enchanting your followers by your beauty. I will also have my worshippers, who pay court to me; I will write and receive love-letters as other maidens do; I will carry on my own little love-affairs as all other girls do; as you did, from the time you were twelve years old, and still do!"

"Silence, Camilla! or I will make you feel that you are still a child!" cried Louise, raising her arm threateningly and approaching the divan.

"Would you strike me, mother?" said she, with trembling lips. "I counsel you not to do it. Raise your hand once more against me, but think of the consequences. I will run away! I will fly to my poor, dear father, whom you, unhappy one, have made a drunkard! I will remain with him—he loves me tenderly. If I were with him, he would no longer drink."

"Oh, my God, my God!" cried Louise, with tears gushing from her eyes; "it is he who has planted this hate in her heart—he has been the cause of all my wretchedness! She loves her father who has done nothing for her, and she hates her mother who has shown her nothing but love." With a loud cry of agony, she clasped her hands over her face and wept bitterly.

Camilla drew close to her, grasped her hands and pulled them forcibly from her face, then looked in her eyes passionately and scornfully. Camilla was indeed no longer a child. She stood erect, pale, and fiercely excited, opposite to her mother. Understanding and intellect flashed from her dark eyes. There were lines around her mouth which betrayed a passion and a power with which childhood has nothing to do.

"You say you have shown me nothing but love," said Camilla, in a cold and cutting tone. "Mother, what love have you shown me? You made my father wretched, and my childish years were spent under the curse of a most unhappy marriage. I have seen my father weep while you were laughing merrily—I have seen him drunk and lying like a beast at my feet, while you were in our gay saloon receiving and entertaining guests with cool unconcern. You

say you have shown me nothing but love. You never loved me, mother, never! Had you loved me, you would have taken pity with my future—you would not have given me a step-father while I had a poor, dear father, who had nothing in the wide world but me, me alone! You think perhaps, mother, that I am not unhappy; while I am giddy and play foolish pranks, you believe me to be happy and contented. Ah, mother, I have an inward horror and prophetic fear of the future which never leaves me; it seems to me that evil spirits surround me—as if they enchanted me with strange, alluring songs. I know they will work my destruction, but I cannot withstand them—I must listen, I must succumb to them. I would gladly be different—be better. I desire to be a virtuous and modest girl, but alas, alas, I cannot escape from this magic circle to which my mother has condemned me! I have lived too fast, experienced too much—I am no longer a child—I am an experienced woman. The world and the things of the world call me with a thousand alluring voices, and I shall be lost as my mother was lost! I am her most unhappy daughter, and her blood is in my heart!" Almost insensible, crushed by excitement and passion, Camilla sank to the earth.

Her mother looked at her with cold and tearless eyes; her hair seemed to stand erect, and a cold, dead hand seemed placed upon her heart and almost stilled its beatings. "I have deserved this," murmured she; "God punishes the levity of my youth through my own child." She bowed down to her daughter and raised her softly in her arms.

"Come, my child," she said, tenderly, "we will forget this hour—we will strive to live in love and harmony with each other. You are right! You are no longer a child, and I will think of introducing you to the world."

"And you will dismiss Madame Brunnen," said Camilla, gayly. "Oh, mamma, you have no idea how she tortures and martyrs me with her Argus-eyes, and watches me day and night. Will you not dismiss her, mamma, and take no other governess?"

"I will think of it," said her mother, sadly. But now a servant entered and announced Count Ranuzi. Madame du Trouffle blushed, and directed the servant to conduct him to the parlor.

Camilla looked at her roguishly, and said: "If you really think me a grown-up girl, take me with you to the parlor."

Madame du Trouffle refused. "You are not properly dressed, and besides, I have important business with the count."

Camilla turned her back scornfully, and her mother left the room; Camilla returned to the sofa and Madame du Trouffle entered the saloon. In the levity and frivolity of their hearts they had both forgotten this sad scene in the drama of a demoralized family life;

such scenes had been too often repeated to make any lasting impression.

Madame du Trouffle found Count Ranuzi awaiting her. He came forward with such a joyous greeting, that she was flattered, and gave him her hand with a gracious smile. She said triumphantly to herself that the power of her charms was not subdued, since the handsome and much admired Ranuzi was surely captivated by them.

The count had pleaded yesterday for an interview, and he had done this with so mysterious and melancholy a mien, that the gay and sportive Louise had called him the Knight of Toggenberg, and had asked him plaintively if he was coming to die at her feet.

"Possibly," he answered, with grave earnestness—"possibly, if you are cruel enough to refuse the request I prefer."

These words had occupied the thoughts of this vain coquette during the whole night; she was convinced that Ranuzi, ravished by her beauty, wished to make her a declaration, and she had been hesitating whether to reject or encourage him. As he advanced so gracefully and smilingly to meet her, she resolved to encourage him and make him forget the mockery of yesterday.

Possibly Ranuzi read this in her glance, but he did not regard it; he had attained his aim—the interview which he desired. "Madame," said he, "I come to make honorable amends, and to plead at your feet for pardon." He bowed on one knee, and looked up beseechingly.

Louise found that his languishing and at the same time glowing eyes were very beautiful, and she was entirely ready to be gracious, although she did not know the offence. "Stand up, count," said she, "and let us talk reasonably together. What have you done, and for what must I forgive you?"

"You annihilate me with your magnanimity," sighed Ranuzi. "You are so truly noble as to have forgotten my boldness of yesterday, and you choose to forget that the poor, imprisoned soldier, intoxicated by your beauty, carried away by your grace and amiability, has dared to love you and to confess it. But I swear to you, madame, I will never repeat this offence. The graceful mockery and keen wit with which you punished me yesterday has deeply moved me, and I assure you, madame, you have had more influence over me than any prude with her most eloquent sermon on virtue could have done. I have seen my crime, and never again will my lips dare to confess what lives and glows in my heart." He took her hand and kissed it most respectfully.

Louise was strangely surprised, and it seemed to her not at all necessary for the count to preserve so inviolable a silence as to his

love; but she was obliged to appear pleased, and she did this with facility and grace.

"I thank you," she said, gayly, "that you have freed me from a lover whom, as the wife of Major du Trouffle, I should have been compelled to banish from my house. Now I dare give a pleasant, kindly welcome, to Count Ranuzi, and be ready at all times to serve him gladly."

Ranuzi looked steadily at her. "Will you truly do this?" said he, sighing—"will you interest yourself for a poor prisoner, who has no one to hear and sympathize in his sorrows?"

Louise gave him her hand. "Confide in me, sir count," said she, with an impulse of her better nature; "make known your sorrows, and be assured that I will take an interest in them. You are so prudent and reasonable as not to be my lover, and I will be your friend. Here is my hand—I offer you my friendship; will you accept it?"

"Will I accept it?" said he, rapturously; "you offer me life, and ask if I will accept it!"

Louise smiled softly. She found that Ranuzi declared his friendship in almost as glowing terms as he had confessed his love. "So then," said she, "you have sorrows that you dare not name?"

"Yes, but they are not my own individual griefs I suffer, but it is for another."

"That sounds mysterious. For whom do you suffer?"

"For a poor prisoner, who, far from the world, far from the haunts of men, languishes in wretchedness and chains—whom not only men but God has forgotten, for He will not even send His minister Death to release him. I cannot, I dare not say more—it is not my secret, and I have sworn to disclose it to but one person."

"And this person—"

"Is the Princess Amelia of Prussia," said Ranuzi.

Louise shrank back, and looked searchingly at the count. "A sister of the king! And you say that your secret relates to a poor prisoner?"

"I said so. Oh, my noble, magnanimous friend, do not ask me to say more; I dare not, but I entreat you to help me. I must speak with the princess. You are her confidante and friend, you alone can obtain me an interview."

"It is impossible! impossible!" cried Madame du Trouffle, rising up and pacing the room hastily. Ranuzi followed her with his eyes, observed every movement, and read in her countenance every emotion of her soul.

"I will succeed," said he to himself, and proud triumph swelled his heart.

Louise drew near and stood before him.

"Listen," said she, gravely; "it is a daring, a dangerous enterprise in which you wish to entangle me—doubly dangerous for me, as the king suspects me, and he would never forgive it if he should learn that I had dared to act against his commands, and to assist the Princess Amelia to save an unhappy wretch whom he had irretrievably condemned. I know well who this prisoner is, but do not call his name—it is dangerous to speak it, even to think it. I belong not to the confidantes of the princess in this matter, and I do not desire it. Speak no more of the prisoner, but of yourself. You wish to be presented to the princess. Why not apply to Baron Pöllnitz?"

"I have not gold enough to bribe him; and, besides that, he is a babbler, and purchasable. To-morrow he would betray me."

"You are right; and he could not obtain you a secret interview. One of the maids of honor must always be present, and the princess is surrounded by many spies. But there is a means, and it lies in my hands. Listen!"

Louise bowed and whispered.

Ranuzi's face sparkled with triumph.

"To-morrow, then," said he, as he withdrew.

"To-morrow," said Louise, "expect me at the castle gate, and be punctual."

CHAPTER V.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

THE heavy curtains were drawn down, and a gloomy twilight reigned in this great, silent room, whose dreary stillness was only interrupted by the monotonous stroke of the clock, and the deep sighs and lamentations which came from the sofa in a distant part of the room. There in the corner, drawn up convulsively and motionless, lay a female form, her hands clasped over her breast, her eyes fixed staringly toward heaven, and from time to time uttering words of grief and scorn and indignation.

She was alone in her anguish—ever alone; she had been alone for many years; grief and disappointment had hardened her heart, and made it insensible to all sorrows but her own. She hated men, she hated the world, she railed at those who were gay and happy, she had no pity for those who wept and mourned.

Had she not suffered more? Did she not still suffer? Who had been merciful, who had pitied her sorrows? Look now at this poor,

groaning woman! Do you recognize these fearful features, deformed by sickness and grief; these blood-shot eyes, these thin, colorless lips, ever convulsively pressed together, as if to suppress a wild shriek of agony, which are only unclosed to utter cold, harsh words of scorn and passion? Do you know this woman? Has this poor, unhappy, deformed being any resemblance to the gay, beautiful, intellectual Princess Amelia, whom we once knew? and yet this is the Princess Amelia. How have the mighty fallen! Look at the transforming power of a few sorrowful years! The sister of a mighty hero king, but a poor desolate creature, shunned and avoided by all; she knows that men fly from her, and she will have it so; she will be alone—lonely in the midst of the world, even as *he* is, in the midst of his dark and gloomy prison. Amelia calls the whole world her prison; she often says to herself that her soul is shut in behind the iron bars of her body and can never be delivered, that her heart lies upon the burning gridiron of the base world, and cannot escape, it is bound there with the same chains which are around about and hold *him* in captivity.

But Amelia says this only to herself, she desires no sympathy, she knows no one will dare to pity her. Destiny placed her high in rank and alone—alone she will remain; her complaints might perhaps bring new danger to him she loves, of whom alone she thinks, for whose sake alone she supports existence, she lives only for him. Can this be called life? A perpetual hope—and yet hopeless—a constant watching and listening for one happy moment, which never comes! She had not been permitted to live for him, she would not die without him. So long as he lived he might need her aid, and might call upon her for help in the hour of extremest need, so she would not die.

She was not wholly dead, but her youth, her heart, her peace, her illusions, her hopes were dead; she was opposed to all that lived, to the world, to all mankind. In the wide world she loved but two persons: one, who languished in prison and who suffered for her sake, Frederick von Trenck; the other, he who had made her wretched and who had the power to liberate Trenck and restore their peace—the king. Amelia had loved her mother, but she was dead; grief at the lost battle of Collin killed her. She had loved her sister, the Margravine of Baireuth; but she died of despair at the lost battle of Hochkirch. Grief and the anger and contempt of the king had killed her brother, the Prince Augustus William of Prussia. She was therefore alone, alone! Her other sisters were far away; they were happy, and with the happy she had nothing to do; with them she had no sympathy. Her two brothers were in the field, they thought not of her. There was but one who remem-

bered her, and he was under the earth—not dead, but buried—buried alive. The blackness of thick darkness is round about him, but he is not blind; there is glorious sunshine, but he sees it not.

These fearful thoughts had crushed Amelia's youth, her mind, her life; she stood like a desolate ruin under the wreck of the past. The rude storms of life whistled over her, and she laughed them to scorn; she had no more to fear—not she; if an oak fell, if a fair flower was crushed, her heart was glad; her own wretchedness had made her envious and malicious; perhaps she concealed her sympathy, under this seeming harshness; perhaps she gave herself the appearance of proud reserve, knowing that she was feared and avoided. Whoever drew near her was observed and suspected; the spies of the king surrounded her and kept her friends, if she had friends, far off. Perhaps Amelia would have been less unhappy if she had fled for shelter to Him who is the refuge of all hearts; if she had turned to her God in her anguish and despair. But she was not a pious believer, like the noble and patient Elizabeth Christine, the disdained wife of Frederick the Great.

Princess Amelia was the true sister of the king, the pupil of Voltaire; she mocked at the church and scorned the consolations of religion. She also was forced to pay some tribute to her sex; she failed in the strong, self-confident, intellectual independence of Frederick; her poor, weak, trembling hands wandered around seeking support; as religion, in its mighty mission, was rejected, she turned for consolation to superstition. While Elizabeth Christine prayed, Amelia tried her fortune with cards; while the queen gathered around her ministers of the gospel and pious scholars, the princess called to the prophets and fortune-tellers. While Elizabeth found comfort in reading the Holy Scriptures, Amelia found consolation in the mystical and enigmatical words of her soothsayers. While the queen translated sermons and pious hymns into French, Amelia wrote down carefully all the prophecies of her cards, her coffee-grounds, and the stars, and both ladies sent their manuscripts to the king.

Frederick received them both with a kindly and pitiful smile. The pious manuscript of the queen was laid aside unread, but the oracles of the princess were carefully looked over. Perhaps this was done in pity for the poor, wounded spirit which found distraction in such child's play. It is certain that when the king wrote to the princess, he thanked her for her manuscripts, and asked her to continue to send them.* But he also demanded perfect silence as to this strange correspondence; he feared his enemies might falsely interpret his consideration for the weakness of the princess; they

* Thiébault, p. 279.

might suppose that he needed these prophecies to lead him on to victory, as his adversaries needed the consecrated sword.

This was one of the days on which the princess was accustomed to receive her fortune-teller; she had been very angry when told that she was under arrest; neither the prophet nor the fortune-teller were at liberty, and the princess was not able to obtain their release. She would, therefore, have been compelled to forego her usual occupation for the evening, had not Madame du Trouffle come to her aid. Louise had written that morning to the princess, and asked permission to introduce a new soothsayer, whose prophecies astonished the world, as, so far, they had been literally fulfilled. Amelia received this proposition joyfully, and now waited impatiently for Madame du Trouffle and the soothsayer; but she was yet alone, it was not necessary to hide her grief in stoical indifference, to still the groans of agony which, like the last sighs from a death-bed, rang from her breast.

The princess suffered not only from mental anguish; her body was as sick as her soul. The worm gnawing at her heart was also devouring her body; but neither for body nor soul would she accept a physician, she refused all sympathy for intellectual and physical pain. Amelia suffered and was silent, and only when as now she was certain there was no eye to see, no ear to hear her complaints, did she give utterance to them. And now the maid entered and announced Madame du Trouffle and the prophet.

"Let them enter," said the princess in a hollow, death-like voice; "let them enter, and remain yourself, Fraulein Lethow; the soothsayer shall tell your fortune."

The door opened, and Madame du Trouffle entered. She was gay and lovely as ever, and drew near the princess with a charming smile. Amelia returned her salutation coldly and carelessly.

"How many hours have you spent at your toilet to-day?" said she, roughly; "and where do you buy the *rouge* with which you have painted your cheeks?"

"Ah, your royal highness," said Louise, smiling, "Nature has been kind to me, and has painted my cheeks with her own sweet and cunning hand."

"Then Nature is in covenant with you, and helps you to deceive yourself to imagine that you are yet young. I am told that your daughter is grown up and wondrously beautiful, and that only when you stand near her is it seen how old and ugly you are."

Louise knew the rancor of the unhappy princess, and she knew no one could approach her without being wounded—that the undying worm in her soul was only satisfied with the blood it caused to flow. The harsh words of the princess had no sting for her. "If I

were truly old," said she, "I would live in my daughter · she is said to be my image, and when she is praised, I feel myself flattered."

"A day will come when she will be blamed and *you* will also be reproached," murmured Amelia. After a pause she said: "So you have brought me another deceiver who declares himself a prophet?"

"I do not believe him to be an impostor, your highness. He has given me convincing proofs of his inspiration."

"What sort of proofs? How can these people who prophesy of the future prove that they are inspired?"

"He has not told me of the future, but of the past," said Louise.

"Has he had the courage to recall any portion of your past to you?" said the princess, with a coarse laugh.

"Many droll and merry portions, your highness, and it is to be regretted that they were all true," she said, with comic pathos.

"Bring in this soothsayer, Fraulein von Lethow. He shall prophesy of you: I think you have not, like Madame du Trouffle, any reason to fear a picture of your past."

The prophet entered. He was wrapped in a long black robe, which was gathered around his slender form by a black leathern girdle covered with curious and strange figures and emblems; raven black hair fell around his small, pale face; his eyes burned with clouded fire, and flashed quickly around the room. With head erect and proud bearing, he drew near the princess, and only when very near did he salute her, and in a sweet, soft, melodious voice, asked why she wished to see him.

"If you are truly a prophet, you will know my reasons."

"Would you learn of the past?" said he, solemnly.

"And why not first of the future?"

"Because your highness distrusts me and would prove me. Will you permit me to take my cards? If you allow it, I will first prophesy to this lady." He took a mass of soiled, curiously painted cards, and spread them out before him on the table He took the hand of Fraulein Lethow and seemed to read it earnestly; and now, in a low, musical voice, he related little incidents of the past. They were piquant little anecdotes which had been secretly whispered at the court, but which no one dared to speak aloud, as Fraulein Lethow passed for a model of virtue and piety.

She received these developments of the prophet with visible scorn. In place of laughing, and by smiling indifference bringing their truth in question, she was excited and angry, and thus prepared for the princess some gay and happy moments

"I dare not decide," said Amelia, as the prophet ceased, "whether what you have told is true or false. Fraulein Lethow alone can

know that; but she will not be so cruel as to call you an impostor, for that would prevent me from having my fortune told. Allow me, therefore, to believe that you have spoken the truth. Now take your cards and shuffle them."

"Does your highness wish that I should tell you of the past?" said the soothsayer, in a sharp voice.

The princess hesitated. "Yes," said she, "of my past. But no; I will first hear a little chapter out of the life of my chaste and modest Louise. Now, now, madame, you have nothing to fear; you are pure and innocent, and this little recitation of your by-gone days will seem to us a chapter from 'La Pucelle d'Orléans.'"

"I dare to oppose myself to this lecture," said Louise, laughing. "There are books which should only be read in solitude, and to that class belong the volumes of my past life. I am ready in the presence of your highness to have my future prophesied, but of my past I will hear nothing—I know too much already."

"Had I been alone with Fraulein Lethow, I should have told her many other things, and she would have been forced to believe in my power. Only when these cards are under your eyes is my spirit clear."

"I must, then, in order to know the whole truth from you, be entirely alone?" said the princess.

The prophet bowed silently. Amelia fixed a piercing glance upon him, and nodded to her ladies.

"Go into the next room," said she. "And now," said the princess, "you can begin."

The magician, instead of taking the cards, knelt before the princess and kissed the hem of her robe. "I pray for mercy and forgiveness," said he; "I am nothing but a poor impostor! In order to reach the presence of your royal highness, I have disguised myself under this mask, which alone made it possible. But I swear to you, princess, no one knows of this attempt, no one can ever know it—I alone am guilty. Pardon, then, princess—pardon for this bold act. I was forced to this step—forced to clasp your knees—to implore you in your greatness and magnanimity, to stand by me! I was impelled irresistibly, for I had sworn a fearful oath to do this thing."

"To whom have you sworn?" said the princess, sternly. "Who are you? what do you ask of me?"

"I am Count Ranuzi Austrian captain and prisoner of war. I implore you noble princess to have mercy upon a poor, helpless prisoner, consumed with grief and despair. God and the world have forsaken him, but he has one protecting angel in whom he trusts to whom he prays—and her name is Amelia! He is bound

in chains like a wild beast—a hard stone is his couch, and a vault beneath is his grave—he is living and buried—his heart lives and heaves and calls to you, princess, for rescue."

The Princess Amelia shrank back trembling and groaning on the sofa; her eyes were wide open, and staring in the distance. After a long pause, she said, slowly: "Call his name."

"Frederick von Trenck!"

Amelia shuddered, and uttered a low cry. "Trenck!" repeated she, softly; "oh, what sad melody lies in that word! It is like the death-cry of my youth. I think the very air must weep when this name vibrates upon it. Trenck, Trenck! How beautiful, how lovely that sounds; it is a sweet, harmonious song; it sings to me softly of the only happiness of my life. Ah, how long, how long since this song was silenced! All within me is desolate! On every side my heart is torn—on every side! Oh, so drear, so fearful! All! all!" Lost in her own thoughts, these words had been slowly uttered. She had forgotten that she was not alone with her remembrances, which like a cloud had gathered round about her and shut off the outward world.

Ranuzi did not dare to recall her thoughts—he still knelt at her feet.

Suddenly her whole frame trembled, and she sprang up. "My God! I dream, while he calls me! I am idly musing, and Trenck has need of me. Speak, sir, speak! What do you know of him? Have you seen him? Did he send you to me?"

"He sent me, your highness, but I have not seen him. Have the grace to listen to me. Ah, your highness, in what I now say I lay the safety of a dear and valued friend, yes, his life, at your feet. One word from you, and he will be delivered over to a court-martial and be shot. But you will not speak that word—you are an angel of mercy."

"Speak, sir—speak, sir," said Amelia, breathlessly. "My God! do you not see that I am dying from agitation?"

"Princess, Trenck lives—he is in chains—he is in a hole under the earth—but he lives, and as long as he has life, he hopes in you—has wild dreams of liberty, and his friends think and hope with him. Trenck has friends who are ready to offer up their lives for him. One of them is in the fortress of Magdeburg—he is lieutenant of the guard; another is a Captain Kimsky, prisoner of war; I am a third. I have known Trenck since my youth. In our beautiful days of mirth and revelry, we swore to stand by each other in every danger. The moment has come to fulfil my oath—Trenck is a prisoner, and I must help to liberate him. Our numbers are few and dismembered—we need allies in the fortress, and still more in the

city. We need powerful assistance, and no one but your highness can obtain it for us."

"I have an assured and confidential friend in Magdeburg," said the princess; "at a hint from me he will be ready to stand by you to—"

Suddenly she was silent, and cast a searching, threatening glance at Ranuzi. She had been too often deceived and circumvented—snares had been too often laid at her feet—she was distrustful. "No, no," said she, at last, sternly, rudely—"I will take no part in this folly. Go, sir—go. You are a poor soothsayer, and I will have nothing to do with you."

Ranuzi smiled, and drew a folded paper from his bosom, which he handed to the princess. It contained these words: "Count Ranuzi is an honest man—he can be trusted unconditionally." Under these words was written: "Nel tue giorni felici, vicordati da me."

The breast of Amelia heaved convulsively—she gazed at these written characters; at last her eyes filled with tears—at last her heart was overcome by those painful and passionate feelings which she had so long kept in bondage. She pressed the paper, the lines on which were written with his blood, to her lips, and hot tears gushed from those poor eyes which for long, long years, had lost the power to weep.

"Now, sir," said she, "I believe in you, I trust you. Tell me what I have to do."

"Three things fail us, princess: A house in Magdeburg, where Trenck's friends can meet at all hours, and make all necessary preparations, and where he can be concealed after his escape. Secondly, a few reliable and confiding friends, who will unite with us and aid us. Thirdly, we must have gold—we must bribe the guard, we must buy horses, we must buy friends in the fortress, and lastly, we must buy French clothing. Besides this, I must have permission to go for a few days to Magdeburg, and there on the spot I can better make the final preparations. A fair pretext shall not fail me for this; Captain Kimsky is my near relative—he will be taken suddenly ill, and as a dying request he will beg to see me; one of his comrades will bring me notice of this, and I will turn imploringly to your highness."

"I will obtain you a passport," said Amelia, decisively.

"While in Magdeburg, the flight will be arranged."

"And you believe you will succeed?" said the princess, with a bright smile, which illuminated her poor deformed visage with a golden ray of hope.

"I do not only believe it, I know it; that is, if your royal highness will assist us."

The princess made no reply; she stepped to her desk and took from it several rolls of gold, then seated herself and wrote with a swift hand: "You must trust the bearer fully, he is my friend; assist him in all that he undertakes." She folded the paper and sealed it.

Ranuzi followed every movement with flashing eyes and loudly beating heart. As she took the pen to write the address a ray of wild triumph lighted his dark face, and a proud smile played about his mouth. As Amelia turned, all this disappeared, and he was dignified and grave as before.

"Take this, sir," said she; "you see that I place in your power a faithful and beloved friend, he is lost if you are false. As soon as you reach Magdeburg go to him, and he will make other friends and allies known to you."

"Can I make use of this address, and write under it to my friend Kimsky?" said Ranuzi.

"Yes, without danger. To-day I will find means to inform him that he may expect this letter. Here is gold, two hundred ducats, all that I have at present. When this is exhausted, turn again to me and I will again supply you."

Ranuzi took the gold and said, smilingly, "This is the magic means by which we will break his chains."

Amelia took a costly diamond pin, which lay upon the table, and gave it to Ranuzi. She pointed to the paper marked with blood, which she still held in her hand.

"This is a most precious jewel which you have given me—let us exchange."

Ranuzi fell upon his knees and kissed her hand as he took the pin.

"And now, sir, go. My maid is a salaried spy, and a longer interview would make you suspected. You would be watched, and all discovered. Go! If I believed in the power of prayer, I would lie upon my knees night and day, and pray for God's blessing upon your effort. As it is, I can only follow you with my thoughts and hopes. Farewell!"

"Your royal highness sends no reply to these lines, written with Trenck's heart's blood?"

Amelia took the pen and wrote a few hasty lines upon the paper, which she handed Ranuzi. The words were: "Ovunque tu sei vicina ti sono."

"Give him that," said she; "it is not written with my heart's blood, but my heart bleeds for him—bleeds ever inwardly. And now resume your *rôle* of soothsayer—I must call my ladies."

The afternoon of this day Ranuzi wrote to his friend, Captain Kimsky, prisoner of war at Magdeburg:

"The train is laid, and will succeed. The fortress will soon be in our hands. A romantic, sentimental woman's heart is a good thing, easily moved to intrigues. Magdeburg will be ours! Prepare everything—be ill, and call for me; I shall get a passport. I have a powerful protectress, and with such, you know, a man may attain all the desires of his heart!"

CHAPTER VI.

A COURT DAY IN BERLIN.

It was the birthday of Prince Henry, and was to be celebrated with great pomp at the court. The king had himself written explicitly on this subject to the master of ceremonies, Baron Pöllnitz. Pöllnitz was, therefore, actively occupied in the early morning, and no general ever made his preparations for a battle with more earnestness and importance than the good baron gave his orders for the splendid *fête* which was to be given in the royal apartments that night.

And this was indeed a great opportunity. The people of Berlin were to enjoy a ball and a concert, at which all the Italian singers were to be present; and then a rare and costly supper, to which not only the court, but all the officers who were prisoners of war were to be invited.

This supper was to Pöllnitz the great circumstance, the middle point of the *fête*. Such an entertainment was now rare at the court of Berlin, and many months might pass away ere the queen would think of giving another supper. Pöllnitz knew that when he thirsted now for a luxurious meal he must enjoy it at his own cost, and this thought made him shudder. The worthy baron was at the same time a spendthrift and a miser.

Four times in every year he had three or four days of rare and rich enjoyment; he lived *en grand seigneur*, and prepared for himself every earthly luxury; these were the first three or four days of every quarter in which he received his salary. With a lavish hand he scattered all the gold which he could keep back from his greedy creditors, and felt himself young, rich, and happy. After these fleeting days of proud glory came months of sad economy: he was obliged to play the *rôle* of a parasitical plant, attach himself to some firm, well-rooted stem, and absorb its strength and muscle. In these days of restraint he watched like a pirate all those who were in the condition to keep a good table, and so soon as he learned that a dinner was on hand, he knew how to conquer a place. At these

times he was also a passionate devotee of the card-table, and it was the greatest proof of his versatility and dexterity that he always succeeded in making up his party, though every man knew it cost gold to play cards with Pöllnitz. The grand-master had the exalted principles of Louis XV. of France, who was also devoted to cards. Every evening the great Louis set apart a thousand louis d'or to win or lose. If the king won, the gold went into his private pocket; if he lost, the state treasury suffered.

Following this royal example, Pöllnitz placed the gold he won in his pocket; if he lost, he borrowed the money to pay—he considered this borrowed sum as also the clear profit of his game; he was assured to win, and in this way he obtained his pocket money.

To-day, however, he would not be merry at a strange table; he himself would do the honors, and he had conducted the arrangements of the table with a scholarship and knowledge of details which would have obtained the admiration of the Duke de Richelieu.

On this occasion it was not necessary to restrain his luxurious desires and tastes. Honor demanded that the court should show itself in full pomp and splendor, and prove to the world that this long, wearisome war had not exhausted the royal treasury, nor the royal table service of silver; in short, that it was an easy thing to carry on the war, without resorting to the private treasures of the royal house.

It was, therefore, necessary to bring out for this great occasion the golden service which had been the king's inheritance from his mother. Frederick's portion had been lately increased by the death of the Margravine of Baireuth, who had explicitly willed her part to her brother Frederick.*

The queen and the princesses were to appear in all the splendor of their jewels, and by their costly and exquisite toilets impose upon these proud and haughty officers, whom fate had sent as prisoners of war to Berlin, and who would not fail to inform their respective governments of all they saw in the capital.

This *fête* was a demonstration made by the king to his over-confident enemies. He would prove to them that if he wished for peace it was not because the gold failed to carry on the war, but because he wished to give rest and the opportunity to recover to Europe, groaning and bleeding from a thousand wounds. Besides this, the king wished to show his subjects, by the celebration of his brother's birthday, how highly he honored the prince—how gladly he em-

* When the court fled, after the battle of Künendorf, to Magdeburg, they took the golden service which the king inherited from his mother with them; that portion given to Frederick by the margravine was left in Berlin, and the next year, 1760, was seized by the Russians and carried to Petersburg.—"Geschichte Berlins," vol. v., p. 2.

braced the opportunity to distinguish the young general who, during the whole war, had not lost a single battle; but, by his bold and masterly movements, had come to the king's help in the most difficult and dangerous moments.

This celebration should be a refutation of the rumors spread abroad by the king's enemies, that Frederick regarded the success and military talent of his brother with jealous envy.

There were, therefore, many reasons why Pöllnitz should make this a luxurious and dazzling feast; he knew also that Prince Henry would receive a detailed account of the celebration from his adjutant, Count Kalkreuth, who had lingered some months in Berlin because of his wounds, was now fully restored, and would leave Berlin the morning after the ball to return to the army.

And now the important hour had arrived. Pöllnitz wandered through the saloons with the searching glance of a warrior on the field of battle; he pronounced that all was good.

The saloons were dazzling with light; pomp and splendor reigned throughout, and on entering the supper-room you were almost blinded by the array of gold and silver adorning the costly *buffet*, on whose glittering surface the lights were a thousand times reflected.

Suddenly the rooms began to fill; everywhere gold-embroidered uniforms, orders, stars, and flashing gems were to be seen; a promiscuous and strange crowd was moving through these lofty saloons, illuminated by thousands of lights and odorous with the fragrance of flowers.

Side by side with the rich, fantastic uniform of the Russian, was seen the light and active French chasseur; here was to be seen the Hungarian hussar, whose variegated and tasteful costume contrasted curiously with the dark and simple uniform of the Spaniard, who stood near him, both conversing gayly with an Italian, dressed in the white coat of an Austrian officer.

It seemed as if every nation in Europe had arranged a rendezvous for this day in the royal palace at Berlin, or as if the great Frederick had sent specimens to his people of all the various nations against whom he had undertaken this gigantic war.

There were not only Germans from all the provinces, but Italians, Spaniards, Russians, Swedes, Hungarians, Netherlanders, and Frenchmen. All these were prisoners of war—their swords had been stained with the blood of Prussians; the fate of war now confined them to the scabbard, and changed the enemies of the king into guests at his court.

Hundreds of captive officers were now waiting in the saloon for the appearance of the queen, but the Prussian army was scarcely represented. All who were fit for service were in the field, only

the invalids and the old warriors, too infirm for active duty had remained at the capital; even the youths who had not attained the legal age for military duty, had hastened to the army, full of courage and enthusiasm, inspired by the example of their fathers and brothers.

The dazzling appearance of these royal saloons was therefore mostly owing to the flashing uniforms of the prisoners of war. Only a few old Prussian generals, and the courtiers, whose duties prevented them from being heroes, were added to the number.

Herr von Giurgenow, and his friend Captain Belleville, were invited to the ball, and were well pleased to offer their homage to the majesty of Prussia. Count Ranuzi, who, reserved and silent as usual, had been wandering through the saloons, now joined them, and they had all withdrawn to a window, in order to observe quietly and undisturbed the gay crowd passing before them.

"Look you," said Ranuzi, laughing, "this reminds me of the frantic confusion in the anterooms of hell, which Dante has described in such masterly style. We all wear our glittering masks, under which our corpses are hidden; one word from our master and this drapery would fall off, and these grinning death-heads be brought to ruin. It depends solely upon the will of Frederick of Prussia to speak this word. He is our master, and when he commands it, we must lay aside our swords and exchange our uniforms for the garments of a malefactor."

"He will not dare to do this," said Giurgenow; "all Europe would call him a barbarian, and make him answerable for his insolence."

"First, all Europe must be in a condition to call him to account," said Ranuzi, laughing; "and that is certainly not the case at present, I am sorry to say."

"You have not heard, then," said Belleville, "of the glorious victory which our great General Broglie has gained over Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick; all France is jubilant over this happy event, and the Marquise de Pompadour, or rather King Louis, has made this second Turenne, our noble Broglie, marshal."

"I know of this," said Ranuzi; "but I know also that the fortune of battles is inconstant, otherwise we would not now be here."

"It is to be hoped we will not be here long," said Giurgenow, impatiently. "Does it not lie in our power to go at once? What think you? Have we not our swords? They have not dared to take them from us! They tremble before us and honor, in our persons, the nations we represent. Look at the complaisance and consideration with which we are met on all sides. The King of Prussia fears his powerful enemies, and does all in his power to conciliate them.

Suppose that to-night, as soon as the royal family are assembled, we draw our swords and take them all prisoners; we have overpowering numbers, and I think it would be an easy victory. We could make a fortress of this palace, and defend ourselves; they would not dare to make a violent attack, as the queen and princesses would be in our power. What think you of this plan, Count Ranuzi?"

Ranuzi met the sharp and piercing glance of the Russian with cool composure.

"I think it bold, but impossible. We could not maintain our position, one hour. The garrison of Berlin would overcome us. We have no thousands of prisoners in the casements here, as in Küstrin, to aid us in such an attempt."

"The count is right," said Belleville, gayly; "such a grandiose and warlike conspiracy would amount to nothing. We must revenge ourselves in another way for the tedious *ennui* we are made to endure here, and my friends and myself are resolved to do so. We will no longer submit to the shackles of etiquette, which are laid upon us; we will be free from the wearisome constraint which hems us in on every side. These proud ladies wish us to believe that they are modest and virtuous, because they are stiff and ceremonious. They make a grimace at every *équivoque*. We will prove to them that we are not blinded by this outward seeming, and not disposed to lie like Dutchmen, languishing at the feet of our inexorable fair ones. Our brave brothers have conquered the Prussians at Hochkirch and at Bergen; we cannot stand side by side with them in the field, but here, at least, we can humble the Prussian women!"

"I can well believe," whispered Giurgenow, "that you would be pleased to humble the beautiful Fraulein von Marshal?"

"Ah, my friend," said Ranuzi, laughing, "you touch the wound of our poor friend. You do not seem to know that the beautiful Marshal is responsible for the scorn and rage of Count Belleville. She is indeed a haughty and presumptuous beauty; she not only dared to reject the love of the fascinating count, but she showed him the door; and when afterward he ventured to send her a passionate and tender billet-doux, she informed him, through her servant, that she would give the letter to her chambermaid, for whom, without doubt, it was intended."

"*Eh bien*, what do you say to this insolence?" cried the enraged Frenchman. "But she shall do penance for it. I have already made the necessary arrangements with my friends This is not simply a personal affair, it touches the general honor. The whole French army, all France, is insulted in my person It is necessary we should have satisfaction, not only from this presumptuous lady,

but from all the ladies of the court! We will have our revenge this evening! We will show to these dull dames what we think of their prudery. And the queen shall see that we are not at all inclined to bow down to her stiff ceremonies. She is, in our eyes, not a queen —simply the wife of an enemy over whom we will soon triumph gloriously."

"I counsel you, however, to wait till the hour of triumph for your revenge," said Ranuzi. "Your intentions may lead to the worst consequences for us all. The great Frederick will never be a harmless adversary till he is dead, and we would all be ignominiously punished for any contempt shown the queen. You have a personal affair with Fraulein Marshal; well, then, you must make her personally responsible; but do not involve us all in your difficulties. It would be an easy thing to forfeit even this appearance of freedom."

"You are right," said Giurgenow; "we might be banished from Berlin, and that would be a bitter punishment for us all."

"But look! the doors are being thrown open, and the queen and court will appear; you will have the happiness of seeing your cruel fair one," whispered Ranuzi to the Frenchman.

"I assure you she shall repent of her cruelty to-night," said Belleville, gnashing his teeth. Exchanging a significant glance with several French officers, who were standing not far off, he advanced into the saloon to the outer circle, which was formed on both sides, and through which the queen and court must pass.

Now the grand master of ceremonies appeared on the threshold, with his golden staff. Behind him the queen and the Princess Amelia entered the room; both appeared in all the pomp and splendor of their rank. A small diamond-crown glittered in the blonde hair of the queen, a magnificent necklace of diamonds and emeralds was clasped around her dazzlingly white and beautifully formed throat.

Bielfeld had once declared that this necklace could purchase a kingdom. A white robe worked with silver and a dark-red velvet shawl trimmed with ermine fell in graceful folds around the noble and graceful figure of the queen, whose bowed head, and quiet, modest bearing contrasted strangely with the luxury and splendor which surrounded her.

Another striking contrast to the queen was offered in the presence of the Princess Amelia. Like her royal sister, she appeared in complete toilet, adorned with all her jewels—her arms, her throat, her hair, and her hands flashed with diamonds. The festoons of her robe of silver gauze were fastened up with diamond buttons, and beneath appeared a green robe embroidered with silver. The

princess knew full well that all this splendor of toilet, all these flashing gems, would bring into contemptuous notice her sharp, angular figure, and her poor deformed visage; she knew that the eyes of all would be fixed upon her in derision, that her appearance alone would be greetd as a cherished source of amusement, and as soon as her back was turned the whole court would laugh merrily. She assumed, as usual, a cold contemptuous bearing; she met mockery with mockery, and revenged herself by sharp wit and cutting irony for the derisive glances which plainly spoke what the lips dared not utter. She no sooner entered the saloon than she began to greet her acquaintances; every word contained a poisonous sting, which inflicted a grievous wound. When she read in the faces of her victims that her sharp arrows had entered the quivering flesh, a malicious fire sparkled in her eyes, and a bitter smile played upon her lips.

Behind the queen and Princess Amelia appeared the Princess Henry. She was also superbly dressed, but those who looked upon her thought not of her toilet; they were refreshed, enraptured by her adorable beauty—by the goodness and purity written on her rosy cheek. To-day, however, the eyes of the princesses were less clear and dazzling than usual—a gleam of sadness shadowed her fair brow, and her coral lips trembled lightly as if in pain. Perhaps it was the remembrance of the beautiful and happy days, past and gone like a dream, which made the lonely present seem so bitter. Absent-minded and thoughtful, she stepped forward without looking to the right or left, regardless of the flashing orders and stars, of the handsome officers and courtly circle bowing profoundly before her as she passed on.

The court had now passed; the bowed heads were raised, and now the young French officers cast impertinent, almost challenging glances, at the ladies of the queen and the princesses, who drew near and bestowed here and there stolen smiles and light greetings upon their admirers.

Fraulein Marshal did not seem to be aware that the insolent eyes of these haughty Frenchmen were fixed upon her. Proudly erect she advanced; her large blue eyes were turned toward the princess; she gave neither glance nor smile to any one; her noble and beautiful countenance had a stern, resolved expression—her lips were pouting, and her usually soft eyes told tales of an angry soul. There was something Juno-like in her appearance—she was lovely to behold, but cold and stern in her beauty.

As she passed by Count Belleville, he exclaimed with a sigh to his neighbor: "Ah, look at this majestic Galatea, this beautiful marble statue, which can only be awaked to life by kisses."

Fraulein Marshal trembled slightly; a crimson blush suffused her

face, her shoulders, and even her back; but she did not hesitate or turn. She moved on slowly, though she heard the officers laughing and whispering—though she felt that their presumptuous eyes were fixed upon her.

The queen and princesses made the *grande tournée* through the rooms, and then mingled with the guests; all formal etiquette was now laid aside, and a gay and unembarrassed conversation might be carried on till the beginning of the concert. This seemed to degenerate, on the part of the French officers, to an indiscreet, frenzied levity. They laughed and talked boisterously—they walked arm in arm before the ladies, and remarked upon them so boldly, that crimson blushes, or frightened pallor, was the result. Even the queen remarked the strange and unaccountable excitement of her guests, and to put an end to it, she entered the concert-room and ordered the music to commence. Even this had no effect. The royal *capello* played an overture composed by the king, with masterly precision—the singers emulated them in an Italian *aria*—but all this did not silence the noisy conversation of the Frenchmen. They laughed and chatted without restraint; and neither the amazed glances of the princesses nor the signs of the grand-master of ceremonies, made the slightest impression upon them.

Suddenly there was a slight pause, and the Princess Amelia rose up from her seat and beckoned with her fan to Baron Pöllnitz. In a loud and angry voice, she said: "Baron Pöllnitz, I insist upon your forcing these shrieking popinjays of the Marquise de Pompadour to silence. We cannot hear the music for their loud chattering. The like birds may pass very well in the gallant boudoir of a certain marquise, but not in a royal palace of Berlin."

Pöllnitz shrank back in alarm, and fixed an imploring look upon the princess. Amongst the French officers arose an angry murmur, swelling louder and louder, more and more threatening, and completely drowning the music which was just recommencing.

The queen bowed down to the princess. "I pray you, sister," said she, in a low voice, "remember that we are poor, unprotected women, and not in a condition to defend ourselves. Let us appear not to remark this unmannerly conduct, and let us remember that the king has made it our duty to receive the French officers with marked attention."

"You, sister, are simply a slave to the commands of the king. He is more truly your master than your husband," said the princess, angrily.

The queen smiled sweetly. "You are right; I am his slave, and my soul has chosen him for its lord. Blame me not, then, for my obedience."

"Do you intend to allow the arrogant presumption of these haughty Frenchmen to go unpunished?"

"I will take pains not to observe it," said the queen, turning her attention again to the music. During all this time, Count Belleville stood behind Fraulein Marshal. While the concert was going on, he bowed over her and spoke long and impressively. Fraulein Marshal did not reply; neither his ardent love-assurances, nor his glowing reproaches, nor his passionate entreaties, nor his bold and offensive insolence, could draw from her one word, one look.

When the concert was over, and they were about to return to the saloon where, until supper, they could dance and amuse themselves, the young maiden turned with calm composure and indifference to Count Belleville. "Sir, I forbid you to molest me with your presence, and I counsel you no longer to offend my ears with these indecent romances, which you have no doubt learned upon the streets of Paris. But if, believing that I am unprotected, you still dare to insult me, I inform you that my father has this moment arrived, and will certainly relieve me from your disagreeable and troublesome society." She spoke aloud, and not only Belleville, but the group of French officers who stood behind him, heard every word. She passed by them with calm indifference and joined a large, elderly officer, who was leaning against a pillar, and who stretched out his hand smilingly toward her.

"Father," she said, "God himself put it in your heart to come to Berlin this day. You are by my side, and I have nothing to fear. I know you can protect me."

In the mean time, the musicians commenced to play the grave and at the same time coquettish minuet, and the officers drew near the ladies to lead them to the dance. This was done, however, in so bold and unconstrained a manner, with such manifest *nonchalance*, the request was made with such levity, the words were so little respectful, that the ladies drew back frightened.

Princess Amelia called Fraulein Marshal to her side. She took her hand with a kindly smile.

"My child," she said, "I rejoice that you have the courage to defy these shameless coxcombs. Go on, and count upon my protection. Why are you not dancing?"

"Because no one has asked me."

At this moment an officer drew near with diligent haste, apparently to lead her to the dance. While in the act of offering his hand to her he made a sudden movement, as if he had just recognized the lady, turned his back, and withdrew without a word of apology.

The princess was enraged. "I promise you they shall be pun-

ished for this presumption." She turned to Baron Marshal, who stood behind his daughter: "Baron," said she, "if this leads to a duel, I will be your second!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE WINDOW-NICHE.

WHILE these events were occurring in the dancing-room, and the queen was seated at the card-table, the Princess Wilhelmina, wife of Prince Henry, stood in the window-niche of the ball-room and conversed with Count Kalkreuth, the friend and adjutant of her husband. The count had been sent home amongst the wounded, but he was now restored and about to return to the camp. They spoke quickly and impressively together, but the music drowned their words and made them indistinct to all others. What said they to each other? Seemingly petty and indifferent things. They had, perhaps, a deeper, secret meaning, for the countenance of the princess and that of the count were grave, and the sweet smile had vanished from the charming face of the princess. They spoke of unimportant things, perhaps, because they had not the courage for the great word which must be spoken—the word farewell!

"Your royal highness has then no further commission to give me for the prince?" said the count, after a pause.

"No," said the princess; "I wrote to him yesterday by the courier. Describe the ball to him, and tell him how we are, and how you left me."

"I must tell him, then, that your highness is perfectly gay, entirely happy, and glowing with health and beauty," said the count. These were simple and suitable words, but they were spoken in a hard and bitter tone.

The princess fixed her large soft eyes with an almost pleading expression upon the count; then with a quick movement she took a wreath of white roses, which she wore in her bosom, and held them toward him. "As a proof that I am gay and happy," said she, "take these flowers to my husband, and tell him I adorned myself with them in honor of his *fête*."

The count pressed his lips convulsively together and looked angrily upon the princess, but he did not raise his hand to take the flowers—did not appear to see that she held them toward him.

"Well, sir," said the Princess Wilhelmina, "you do not take the flowers?"

"No," said he, passionately, "I will not take them."

The princess looked anxiously around; she feared some one might have heard this stormy "No." She soon convinced herself that there was no listener nearer than her maid of honor; Fraulein Marshal was still near the Princess Amelia, and she was somewhat isolated by etiquette; she saw, therefore, that she dared carry on this conversation.

"Why will you not take my flowers?" she said, proudly.

The count drew nearer. "I will tell you, princess," said he—"I will tell you, if this passionate pain now burning in my breast does not slay me. I will not take your flowers, because I will not be a messenger of love between you and the prince; because I cannot accept the shame and degradation which such an office would lay upon me. Princess you have forgotten, but I remember there was a wondrous time in which I, and not the prince, was favored with a like precious gift. At that time you allowed me to hope that this glowing, inextinguishable feeling which filled my heart, my soul, found an echo in your breast; that at least you would not condemn me to die unheard, misunderstood."

"I knew not at that time that my husband loved me," murmured the princess; "I thought I was free and justified in giving that heart which no one claimed to whom I would."

"You had no sooner learned that the prince loved you than you turned from me, proud and cold," said the count, bitterly; "relentlessly, without mercy, without pity, you trampled my heart under your feet, and not a glance, not a word showed me that you had any remembrance of the past. I will tell you what I suffered. You have a cold heart, it will make you happy to hear of my anguish. I loved you so madly I almost hated you; in the madness of my passion I cursed you. I thanked God for the war, which forced me to that for which I had never found the moral strength to leave you. Yes, I was grateful when the war called me to the field—I hoped to die. I did not wish to dishonor my name by suicide. I was recklessly brave, because I despised life—I rushed madly into the ranks of the enemy, seeking death at their hands, but God's blessed minister disdained me even as you had done. I was borne alive from the battle-field and brought to Berlin to be nursed and kindly cared for. No one knew that here I received daily new and bitter wounds. You were always cruel, cruel even to the last moment; you saw my sufferings, but you were inexorable. Oh, princess, it would have been better to refuse me entrance, to banish me from your presence, than to make my heart torpid under the influence of your cold glance, your polished speech, which ever allured me and yet kept me at a distance. You have played a cruel game with me, princess, you mock me to the last. Shall I be your messenger to the prince?

You know well that I would give my heart's blood for one of those sweet flowers, and you send them by me to another. My humility, my subjection is at an end; you have sinned against me as a woman, and I have therefore the right to accuse you as a man. I will not take these flowers! I will not give them to the prince! And now I have finished—I beg you to dismiss me."

The princess had listened tremblingly; her face became ever paler—completely exhausted, she leaned against the wall.

"Before you go," whispered she, "listen to a few words; it may be that the death you seek may be found on the battle-field—this may be our last interview in this world; in such a moment we dare speak the truth to each other; from the souls which have been closely veiled, may cloud and darkness be for one moment lifted. What I now say to you shall go as a sacred secret with you to the grave, if you fall; but if God hears my prayer, and you return, I command you to forget it, never to remind me of it. You say I have a cold heart. Alas! I only choked the flame which raged within me; I would have my honor and my duty burned to ashes. You say that my eyes are never clouded, that they shed no tears. Ah! believe me, I have wept inwardly, and the silent, unseen tears the heart weeps are bitterer than all others. You reproach me for having received you when you returned here sick and wounded, and for not having closed my doors against you. I know well *that* was my duty, and a thousand times I have prayed to God on my knees for strength to do this, but He did not hear me or He had no mercy. I could not send you off; had my lips spoken the fearful words, the shriek of my heart would have called you back. My lips had strength to refuse an answer to the question which I read in your face, in your deep dejection, but my heart answered you in silence and tears. Like you, I could not forget—like you I remembered the bounteous sweet past. Now you know all—go! As you will not take these flowers to the prince, they are yours, were intended for you; I have baptized them with my tears. Farewell!"

She gave him the flowers, and without looking toward him, without giving him time to answer, she stepped forward and called her chamberlain.

"Count Saldow, be kind enough to accompany Count Kalkreuth, and give him the books and papers my husband has ordered."

Wilhelmina passed on proudly, calmly, with a smile on her lips, but no one knew what it cost her poor heart. She did not look back. Kalkreuth would have given years to take leave once more of the lovely face, to ask pardon for the hard, rude words he had dared to say. The princess had still the bashful timidity of virtue; after the confession she had made she dared not look upon him. The count

controlled himself; he followed Saldow. He was bewildered, rapturously giddy. As he left the castle and entered his carriage he looked up at the window and said: "I will not die!—I will return!" —then pressed the bouquet to his lips and sank back in the carriage.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NUTSHELLS BEHIND THE FAUTEUIL OF THE QUEEN.

Princess Wilhelmina, as we have said, did not look back; she stepped silently through the ball-room, and approached the Princess Amelia. She stood for a moment behind a couple who were dancing the *Francaise*. The French officers had just taught this dance to the Prussian ladies as t' e newest Parisian mode.

It was a graceful and coquettish dance, approaching and avoiding; the ladies stood opposite their cavaliers, and advanced with smiling grace, then appeared to fly from them in mocking haste. They were pursued in artistic tours by their cavaliers; at the end of the dance their hands were clasped in each other's, and they danced through the room with the graceful time and step of the minuet.

Princess Wilhelmina stood silent and unobservant; she knew not the dance was ended; she knew not that the music was silenced. A softer, sweeter, dearer melody sounded in her ears; she heard the echo of that voice which had spoken scornfully, despairingly, and yet love had been the sweet theme.

The sudden stillness waked her from her dream and she stepped forward. The general silence was interrupted by the well-known coarse, stern voice of the Princess Amelia.

"Does this dance please you, Baron Marshal? The French officers have taught it to our ladies as a return for the dance which our brave Prussian soldiers taught the French at Rossbach; at Rossbach, however, they danced to a quicker, faster *tempo*. These Frenchmen are now calling out, '*En avant!*' but at Rossbach, I am told, '*En arrière!*' was the word of command."

A death-like silence followed these sarcastic words of the princess, and throughout the room her mocking, derisive laugh which followed these words was distinctly heard. She rose, and leaning upon the arm of Baron Marshal, advanced to meet the Princess Wilhelmina, and cast a fierce glance at the officers, who were assembled in groups and talking in low tones but earnestly with each other.

Suddenly Belleville, leaning on another officer, advanced from

one of these groups; they walked backward and forward, laughing and chattering loudly, without regarding the presence of the princess. They then drew near the orchestra, and called out in a jovial tone:

"Messieurs, have the kindness to play a Dutch waltz, but in the quick time which the Austrians played at Hochkirch, when they drove the Prussians before them; and in which Field-Marshal Broglie played at Bergen, when he tramped upon the Prussians! Play on, messieurs! play on!"

Belleville then danced forward with great levity of manner to Fraulein Marshal, who stood by the side of her father; without saluting her, he seized her hand.

"Come, *ma toute belle*," said he, "you have played the marble statue long enough for one day; it is time that you should awake to life in my arms. Come, then, and dance with me your lascivious Dutch waltz, which no respectable woman in France would dare to dance! Come! come!"

Belleville tried to drag Fraulein Marshal forward, but at the instant a powerful and heavy arm was laid upon him, and his hand was dashed off rudely.

"I have heard you to the end," said Baron Marshal, calmly; "I wished to see a little of the renowned gallantry of which the Frenchman is so proud. It appears to me that a strange *ton* must now reign in Paris, well suited, perhaps, to the boudoirs of mistresses, but not fitting or acceptable to the ears of respectable women. I beg you therefore, sir, not to assume this *ton* in Berlin; I am resolved not to endure it."

Belleville laughed aloud, drew very near the baron, and looked him insolently in the face.

"Who are you, monsieur, who dare take the liberty of begging me, who do not know you, to do or not do any thing?"

"I am Baron Marshal, the father of this lady whom you have dared to offend!"

Belleville laughed still louder than before.

"Aha! that is a beautiful fairy tale! You who are as hideous as a baboon, and have borrowed the eyes of the cat!—you the father of the lovely Galatea Marshal!—tell that tale to other ears—I do not believe in such aberrations of Nature. I repeat my question: who are you? what is your name?"

"I repeat to you, I am Baron Marshal, the father of this lady."

"You are more credulous, sir, than I am, if you believe that," said Belleville, coarsely.

"Perhaps I am less credulous than you suppose," said Marshal, quietly. "It would, for example, be difficult for me to believe that

you are a nobleman. I can assure you, however, that I am not only noble, but a man of honor."

Belleville was in the act of giving a passionate answer, when the doors of the supper-room were thrown open, and a sea of light irradiated the room.

At this moment, the queen and her ladies entered from the card-room, and, at her appearance, every word, every sound was hushed. Silently, and with a conciliatory smile, the queen passed through the saloon, and seated herself at the table; she then gave the sign to the grand-master, that her guests should be seated. And now the servants, in golden liveries, flew from side to side bearing silver plates, containing the rare and fragrant viands which the inventive head of Baron Pöllnitz had ordered for the favored guests of her majesty the Queen of Prussia.

Nothing is so well calculated to quiet the perturbed soul as a costly and well-prepared feast. The haughty Frenchmen soon forgot their mortified vanity and resentment, and were well pleased to be seated at the table of the "great Frederick." They ate and drank right merrily in honor of the bold and brave prince who had sent them here from Rossbach; but if the rich dishes made them forget their mortification, the fiery wine excited yet more their presumptuous levity. They forgot that they were the guests of a queen. Louder and more extravagant was their gayety, more boisterous, more indiscreet their unrestrained laughter. In their frantic merriment they dared to sing aloud some of the little ambiguous, equivocal *chansons*, which belonged to the *gamins* of Paris, and at which the Marquise de Pompadour laughed till she shed tears when sung sometimes by the merry courtiers.

In vain the grand-master besought them, in his most polished manner, not to sing at table.

"We have been so long forced to listen to the dull, screeching discord of your singers, that we must have some compensation!" said they. "Besides," said Belleville, in a loud voice, "it belongs now to *bon ton* to sing at the table; and the Prussian court should thank us for introducing this new Parisian mode."

They sang, chatted, laughed, and almost overpowered the music by their boisterous levity. Their presumptuous revelry seemed to be every moment on the increase. The Austrian and Russian officers looked upon them with disgust and alarm, and entreated them to desist; but the French officers were regardless of all etiquette. During the dessert, Belleville and some of his friends arose and drew near the table at which the queen and the princesses were seated; this was in the middle of the room, and slightly separated from the other tables. They gazed at the princesses with insolent eyes, and,

placing themselves behind the chair of the queen, they began to crack nuts with their teeth, and throw the shells carelessly upon the floor, near her majesty.

The queen continued a quiet conversation with the Princess Wilhelmina, and appeared wholly unconscious of this rudeness and vulgarity; but her face was pallid, and her eyes filled with tears.

"I pray your majesty to rise from the table!" said the Princess Wilhelmina. "Look at the Princess Amelia; her countenance glows with anger; there is a tempest on her brow, and it is about to burst upon us."

"You are right; that is the best way to end this torture." She rose from the table, and gave a sign for a general movement.

When the queen and her suite had left the room, Baron Marshal drew near Count Belleville.

"Sir," said he, "I told you before that I was not sufficiently credulous to take you for a nobleman. Your conduct at the table has proved that I did well to doubt you. Yourself and friends have shown that you are strangers to the duties of cavaliers, and utterly ignorant of the manners of good society."

"Ah!" cried Belleville, "this offence demands satisfaction."

"I am ready to grant it," said Baron Marshal; "name the time and place of meeting."

"You know well," cried Belleville, "that I am a prisoner, and have given my word of honor not to use my sword!"

"So you were impertinent and shameless, because you knew you were safe? You knew that, thanks to your word of honor, you could not be chastised!"

"Sir," cried Belleville, "you forget that you speak not only to a nobleman, but to a soldier."

"Well, I know that I speak to a Frenchman, who lost his powder-mantle and pomatum-pot at Rossbach."

Belleville, beside himself with rage, seized his sword, and half drew it from the scabbard.

"God be praised, I have a sword with which to revenge insult!" he cried. "I have given my word not to use it on the battle-field against the Prussians, but here we stand as private adversaries, man to man, and I challenge you, sir—I challenge you to mortal combat. I will have satisfaction! You have insulted me as a nobleman, as a Frenchman, and as a soldier. No consideration shall restrain me. I dare not use my sword—well, then, we will fight with pistols. As to time and place, expect me to-morrow, at eight o'clock, in the Thiergarden."

"I accept the conditions, and I will await you with your seconds," said Baron Marshal.

"If the baron has not chosen his seconds," said a soft voice behind him, "I beg to offer my services."

Baron Marshal turned, and saw an officer in the Austrian uniform.

"Count Ranuzi," cried Belleville, astonished; "how, monsieur! you offer yourself as second to my adversary? I had thought to ask this service of you."

"I suspected so," said Ranuzi, with his accustomed calm and quiet manner, "therefore I anticipated you. The right is certainly on the side of Baron Marshal, and in offering myself as his second, I do so in the name of all the Austrian officers who are present. They have all seen the events of this evening with painful indignation. Without doubt the world will soon be acquainted with them; we wish to make an open, public demonstration that we wholly disapprove the conduct of the French officers. The nutshells thrown behind the *fauteuil* of the queen have made us your adversaries, Count Belleville."

"That is not the occasion of this duel, but the affront offered me by Baron Marshal," cried Belleville. "This being the case, will you still be the second of my opponent?"

"I was compelled to insult you," said Baron Marshal, "because you would have given me no satisfaction for the nutshells thrown behind the *fauteuil* of the queen; but be assured that I don't fight with you in order that you may wash out my offence with my blood, but wholly and alone that your blood may wash away the nutshells from the feet of the queen."

Baron Marshal then turned to Ranuzi. "I accept your offer, sir, and rejoice to make the acquaintance of a true nobleman. Have the goodness to meet the seconds of Count Belleville, and make all necessary arrangements. I will call for you early in the morning. I only say further that it is useless to make any attempts at reconciliation—I shall not listen to them. Prussia and France are at war. My great king has made no peace—I also will not hear of it. The nutshells lie behind the *fauteuil* of the queen, and only the blood of Count Belleville can wash them away."

He bowed to Ranuzi, and joined his daughter, who, pale and trembling, awaited him in the next room.

"Oh, father," said she, with tears gushing from her eyes, "your life is in danger—you meet death on my account!"

"No; thank God, my child, your name will not be mixed up in this affair. No one can say that the mortified father revenged an insult offered to his daughter. I fight this duel not for you, but because of the nutshells behind the *fauteuil* of the queen."

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUEL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

EARLY in the morning two horsemen dashed down the Linden. Their loud conversation, their pert and noisy laughter, aroused the curiosity of the porters who stood yawning in the house-doors, and the maids opened the windows and gazed curiously at the two gallant French officers who were taking such an early ride to the Thiergarden. When the girls were young and pretty, Belleville threw them a kiss as he passed by, and commanded them to give it with his tenderest greeting to their fair mistress.

"Happily," said his companion, "these good Berliners do not understand our speech sufficiently to inform their mistresses of this last insolence of Count Belleville."

"They do not, but their mistresses do, and I cannot think that they are still sleeping. No, I am convinced they have risen early, and are now standing behind their maids, and watching us go by. In this street dwell those who call themselves society; they were at the castle yesterday, and know of this duel. I think our good marquise will one day reward me richly for this duel, when I tell her I stood behind the queen and cracked nuts like a *gamin* in Paris, and that I was shot at because of the nutshells. She will laugh tears—tears which I will strive to convert into diamonds for myself."

"You feel assured that you will return unharmed from this duel?"

"Yes, I cannot doubt it. I always won the prize at our pistol-shooting in Paris, and then, this stupid Dutchman is, without doubt, horrified at the thought of shooting at a man, and not at a mark. No, *vraiment*, I do not doubt but I shall be victorious, and I rejoice in anticipation of that *déjeuner dînatoire* with which my friends will celebrate it."

"But," said his second, "let us for a moment suppose that you are not victorious; one must ever be prepared in this poor world, ruled by accident, for the worst that can befall. In case you fall, have you no last commissions to give me?"

Count Belleville stopped his horse as they were in the act of entering the garden.

"You positively insist on burying me? Well, then, I will make my last will. In case I fall go instantly to my quarters, open my writing-desk, and press upon a small button you will see on the left side; there you will find letters and papers; tie them carefully, and send them in the usual way to Countess Bernis. As to my heritage,

you know I have no gold; I leave nothing but debts. My clothes you can give to my faithful servant, François; for the last year I have paid him no wages. Now my testament is made—no, stop, I had forgotten the most important item. Should the inconceivable, the unimaginable happen, should this Dutch village-devil slay me, I make it the duty of the French officers here to revenge me on the haughty daughter of my adversary, and on all these dull and prudish beauties. They must carry out what I intended yesterday. I have drawn a few sketches and added a few notes; make as many copies as are required, and paste them on the designated places. If I fall, this must be done the following night, that my wandering soul may find repose in the sweet consciousness of revenge. If my enemy's ball strikes me, hasten forward, and, before any one dares lay his hand upon me, take from my breast-pocket a paper, which you will find there, and conceal it; it is the drawing, and it is my legacy to my comrades. Swear to me to do as I have said."

"I swear!"

"And now, *mon ami*, let us forget this stupid thought of death, and look life saucily and merrily in the face. Life will not have the courage to break with a brave son of *la belle France.*"

Belleville drew his bridle suddenly, and sprang through the gate into the garden; turning to the right, they rode for some time under the shadow of the trees, then through a side *allée*, which led to an open place surrounded by lofty oaks. At this moment he heard the roll of an open carriage, and turning, he saluted gayly the two gentlemen who were seated in it; he checked his horse suddenly in order to ride by their side, and provoking the beautiful and noble beast by the rude use of his spurs, he forced it into many difficult and artistic evolutions. Arrived at the place of rendezvous, he sprang lightly from the saddle and fastened his horse to a tree, then drew near Baron Marshal, who, with Ranuzi, was just descending from the carriage.

"No man could be more prudent than yourself, sir," said he, laughing, "to come to a rendezvous in a carriage; truly, that is a wise and, I think on this occasion, well-grounded precaution."

"A forethought which I have exercised on your account," said the baron, gravely. "You, sir, will require a carriage, and knowing you, as a stranger, had no carriage in Berlin, I brought mine. It shall be at your service."

"*Vraiment!* you are too good! I hope, however, not to make use of your offer."

Now, according to custom, Ranuzi drew near the baron to make a last attempt at reconciliation. He answered sternly: "You know that I am not to blame, and therefore will take no step in this mat-

ter. I suppose, Count Belleville is as little disposed as myself to make apologies."

"I intend to prove to you, sir baron, that I am a nobleman and a brave one; and as to the nuts which I cracked behind the queen, my only regret is, that they, like every thing else in your detested Berlin, were hollow."

"No, sir, they were not at all hollow," said Baron Marshal, drawing up the cock of his pistol; "in one of those nuts I saw a death-worm, which will soon bore into your flesh."

He bowed to Belleville and took the place pointed out by his second. The second of Belleville then drew near, and led him to the outermost point of the line.

The Frenchman laughed aloud. "How," said he, "you will take me to the end of the world to secure me from the ball of my enemy?"

"Sir," said the grave and solemn voice of the baron, "you will still be too near me."

"Well, sir baron, I give you precedence," said Belleville, laughing, "though, I believe, I have the right; but age must have the precedence—fire, sir."

"No, young man," said Marshal, sadly; "I will grant you one more glance at the glad sun and the fresh, green earth; you shall fire first, and I council you to lay aside your levity; let your hand be firm and your aim steady; if you fail, you are lost. I am a good shot, and I am without mercy."

There was something so convincing, so gloomy in his tone, that Belleville was involuntarily affected by it. For the first time his brow was clouded, and a slight pallor took possession of his cheek; but he forced back this prophetic shudder quickly, and raised his pistol with a firm hand.

Far away, in the still park, sounded the echo of his shot; but opposite to him stood his adversary, firm and calm as before, with his eye fixed steadily upon him.

Belleville threw his pistol to the ground, and drawing his gold snuff-box from his vest-pocket with his small white hands, adorned with cuffs of lace, he played carelessly upon the lid; then opened it, and slowly and gracefully took a pinch of snuff, saying, coolly, "I await your ball."

Marshal raised his pistol and aimed directly at the head of his enemy, who looked him firmly in the eye. The appearance of this youthful, fresh, and brave face softened, against his will, the noble and magnanimous soul of this good man. He let his arm fall. "Sir," said he, "you are so young, perhaps your life may improve. I will not kill you. But you need for this life a great, impressive lesson and a lasting warning. I will therefore shoot you through

the right leg, just above the knee." * He raised the pistol quickly, and fired. As the smoke was lifted, Belleville was seen lying bleeding on the ground. The shot had gone right through the knee and broken the knee-pan.

As his second bowed over him, Belleville whispered, with broken eyes and trembling lips: "My legacy! do not forget my legacy! I believe I shall die; this pain is horrible."

The Frenchman took the paper from his pocket and concealed it.

"I will be avenged," said Belleville, with a convulsive smile, then sank into unconsciousness.

Belleville was placed in the carriage of Baron Marshal and carried to the city. Baron Marshal went immediately to the commandant of Berlin, gave notice of what had taken place, and declared himself under arrest.

The commandant took his hand kindly. "The laws forbid duelling, and I must consider you under arrest until I receive further orders. That is to say, house-arrest; you must give me your word not to leave your house. I will send a courier immediately to the king. I was in the castle last night, and witness to all the circumstances which led to this duel, witnessed the conduct of these Frenchmen, and in your place I would have acted just as you have done."

The French officers fulfilled the vow they had made to their wounded comrade; they had promised to revenge him on Fraulein Marshal and the other ladies of the court.

The morning after the duel, on the corners of all the principal streets, placards were pasted, which were soon surrounded by crowds of men, exhibiting astonishment and indignation. These placards contained a register of all the young and beautiful women of the court and city; to these names were added a frivolous and voluptuous personal description of every lady, and to this the name of the French officer which each was supposed to favor. †

An outcry of scorn and rage was heard throughout Berlin; every one was excited at the boundless shamelessness of the French officers, and on this occasion the mass of the people took the part of the rich and the distinguished, whom generally they envied and despised. They felt themselves aggrieved by the contempt and ridicule which these Frenchmen had cast upon the daughters of Prussians, and no police force was necessary to tear these placards from the walls; they were torn off and trampled under foot, or torn into a thousand pieces and scattered to the winds. If a Frenchman dared to show himself on the street, he was received with curses and threats, and

* The words of Baron Marshal.—See Thiébault.

† Thiébault, p. 90.

the police were obliged to forbid them to appear in any public place, as they feared they would not be able to protect them from the fierce indignation of the people. The doors of all the prominent houses, in which heretofore they had received so much attention, were now closed against them. The commandant of Berlin had sent a detailed account of the conduct of the French officers to the king, and the answer had been received.

Eight days after the placards had been pasted up by the Frenchmen, exactly upon the same places new placards were to be found, around which the people were again assembled; on every face was seen a happy smile, from every lip was heard expressions of harmony and approbation. This was a greeting of the king not only to his Berliners, but to Prussia and to the world; he was now "the Great Frederick," and all Europe listened when he spake. Frederick's greeting read thus:

"It is known to all Europe that I have provided every possible comfort to all officers who are prisoners of war. Swedes, Frenchmen, Russians, Austrians I have allowed to pass the time of their captivity at my capital. Many among them have taken advantage of the confidence reposed in them and carried on a forbidden correspondence; they have also, by unmannerly and presumptuous conduct, greatly abused the privileges allowed them; I therefore feel myself constrained to send them to Spandau, which city must not be confounded with the fortress of the same name at Spandau; they will be no more restricted than in Berlin, but they will be more closely watched.

"For this decision I cannot be blamed. The law of nations and the example of my allied enemies justify me fully. The Austrians have not allowed any of my officers who have fallen into their hands to go to Vienna. The Russians have sent their captives to Kasan. My enemies lose no opportunity to give a false aspect to my acts; I have, therefore, thought it wise to make known the causes which lead me to change my policy with regard to the prisoners of war.

"FREDERICK."

Two of the officers, with whom we are acquainted, were not included in this sentence of banishment.

One was Count Belleville. On the day that his comrades, deprived of their swords, left Berlin, his corpse was carried through the outer gate. The shot of Baron Marshal made an amputation necessary, and death was the consequence. While his friends, whose condemnation he had brought about, marched sadly to Spandau, his body was laid in the "Friedhof." To the corpse had been granted a favor denied to the living—his sword was allowed to deck his coffin.

The Austrian officer, Ranuzi, because of his wise and prudent conduct and the powerful support he gave to Baron Marshal, was permitted to remain in Berlin. Ranuzi received this permission with triumphant joy. As he looked from his window at the prisoners marching toward Spandau, he said with a proud smile—"It is written, 'Be wise as a serpent.' These fools have not regarded the words of Holy Writ, and therefore they are punished, while I shall be rewarded. Yes, my work will succeed! God gives me a visible blessing. Patience, then, patience! A day will come when I will take vengeance on this haughty enemy of the Church. On that day the colors of the apostolic majesty of Austria shall be planted on the fortress of Magdeburg!"

CHAPTER X.

THE FIVE COURIERS.

It was the morning of the thirteenth of August. The streets of Berlin were quiet and empty. Here and there might be seen a workman with his axe upon his shoulder, or a tradesman stepping slowly to his *comptoir*. The upper circle of Berlin still slumbered and refreshed itself after the emotions and excitements of yesterday.

Yesterday had been a day of rejoicing; it had brought the news of the great and glorious victory which the crown prince, Ferdinand of Brunswick, had gained at Minden, over the French army under Broglie and Contades.

The crown prince had ever remembered that great moment in the beginning of the war, when his mother took leave of him in the presence of the Brunswick regiments. Embracing him for the last time, she said: "I forbid you to appear before me till you have performed deeds of valor worthy of your birth and your allies!" *

Her son, the worthy nephew of Frederick the Great had now bought the right to appear before his mother.

By the victories of Gotsfeld and Minden he had now wiped out the defeat at Bergen, and the laurels which Brissac had won there were now withered and dead.

Berlin had just received this joyful news. After so much sorrow, so much humiliation and disappointment, she might now indulge herself in a day of festal joy, and, by public declarations and testimonials, make known to the world how dear to her heart was this victory of her king and his generals, and how deep and warm was the sympathy she felt.

*Bodman.

All work was set aside in honor of this great celebration—the people were spread abroad in the meadows and woods, shouting and rejoicing, playing and dancing; the rich and the distinguished joined them without ceremony, to prove to the world that in such great moments, all differences of rank were forgotten—that they were all members of one body—united in joy and in sorrow by an electric chain.

So they slumbered on; the streets were still empty, the windows still closed.

But see! There comes a horseman through the Frankfort gate, dusty and breathless; his glowing face was radiant with joy! As he dashed through the streets he waved a white handkerchief high in the air, and with a loud and powerful voice, cried out, "Victory! victory!"

This one word had a magic influence. The windows flew up, the doors were dashed open, and shouting and screaming crowds of men rushed after the horseman. At a corner they surrounded his horse and compelled him to stop. "Who is victorious?" cried they tumultuously.

"The king—the great Frederick! He has whipped the Russians at Künersdorf!"

A cry of rapture burst from every lip. "The king is victorious! he has defeated the Russians!"

Onward flew the courier to the palace; after him streamed the mad people. "The days of mourning are over—the blood of our sons has not been shed in vain, they are the honored dead—their death brought victory to the fatherland; they have drenched the soil with the blood of our barbarous enemies. We whipped the French at Minden, the Russians at Künersdorf, and now we have defeated the Austrians and won back the trophies of their victory at Hochkirch!"

The people surrounded the castle shouting and triumphing. The courier had entered to give to the queen the joyful news. Soon the royal messengers were flying into every corner of the city to summon the ministers and officers of state to the castle. On foot, on horseback, in carriages, they hastened on, and the people received them with joyful shouts. "The king is victorious; the Russians are defeated!"

And now a door opened on a balcony, and Minister Herzberg stepped out. He waved his hat joyfully high in the air. The people returned this greeting with a roar like an exulting lion. He waved his hand, and the lion ceased to roar—there was death-like silence. He then told them that the king had offered battle to the Russians, yesterday, not far from Frankfort. The Russian army was greatly superior in numbers; they received the Prussians with a fearful,

deadly fire! Unrestrainable, regardless of cannon-balls, or of death, the Prussians rushed on, stormed all the strongholds, and drove the Russian militia with fearful slaughter back to the graveyard of Künersdorf. At five o'clock the king sent off the courier and the victory was assured.

"The victory was assured!" reëchoed the mighty voice of the people. With warm and kindly eyes they looked upon each other. Proud, glad, happy, men who did not know each other, who had never met, now felt that they were brothers, the sons of one fatherland, and they clasped hands, and shouted their congratulations.

Suddenly, at the end of the street, another horseman appeared. He drew nearer and nearer. It is a second courier, a second message of our king to his family and his Berliners.

The people looked at him distrustfully, anxiously. What means this second courier? What news does he bring?

His countenance gay, his brow clear, with a flashing smile he greets the people. He brings news of victory—complete, assured victory.

Like the first courier, he dashed on to the castle, to give his dispatches to the queen and the ministers. The people were drunk with joy. The equipages of the nobles rolled by. Every one whose rank gave him the privilege wished to offer his personal congratulations to the queen.

And now in the Königstrasse was seen a venerable procession. The magistrates of Berlin—in front the burgomasters with their long periwigs and golden chains, behind them the worthy city council—all hastened to the castle to offer congratulations in the name of the city.

The crowd drew back respectfully before the worthy city fathers, and opened a path for them, then fixed their eyes again upon the balcony where Minister Herzberg again appeared, and called for silence.

He will give us the news of the second courier. The victory is absolute. The Russians completely defeated. They had retreated to Künersdorf. In this village they proposed to defend themselves. But the Prussians were unceasingly pressing upon them. Seven redoubts, Kirchhof, Spitzberg, and one hundred and eighty-six cannon had been taken. The enemy had suffered a monstrous loss, and was in the greatest confusion. The fate of the day seemed conclusive. This was owing to the heroic courage of the army, whom neither the blazing heat of the sun nor the unexampled slaughter could for a moment restrain. At six o'clock, when the king sent off this second courier, the enemy had retreated behind his last intrenchments, and taken refuge at Gudenberg.*

* Frederick the Great.—Thiébault.

A loud hurrah broke from the people as Herzberg finished and left the balcony. Now there was no room for doubt. The enemy was overwhelmed and had fled to his last intrenchment. Would the king leave him unmolested, and would he not still drive the hated enemy further?

While groups of men were assembled here and there, discussing these weighty questions, and others, intoxicated, drunk with joy at this great victory over their hereditary enemy, were making eloquent addresses to the people, a third courier appeared in sight.

Breathless with expectation and anxiety, they would not give him time to reach the castle. They must—they would know the news he brings. There should be no delay, no temporizing, no mysteries. The people were one great family. They awaited the message of their father. They demanded news of their distant sons and brothers.

The third courier brings renewed assurances. The Russians are routed. The king will give them no rest. He will drive them from their last stronghold. With his whole army, with cavalry and militia, with all his cannon, he was in the act of storming Gudenberg. This is the message of the third courier.

The people are proud and happy. No one thinks of going home. In fact, they have no home but the streets. Every house would be too small for this great family which feels a thirst to express its joy and its rapture to each other. And then it was possible the king might send another courier. Who could go home till they knew that the Russians were driven from their last stronghold, that Gudenberg was drenched in Russian blood?

No one doubted that this news would come—must come. Not the slightest fear, the least doubt troubled the proud, pure joy of this hour. The victory was achieved, but it was still charming to hear it confirmed; to receive these heavenly messages. Every open space was filled with men. Each one would see and hear for himself. No man thought himself too distinguished, too sick, too weak, to stand for hours in the burning sun, carried about involuntarily by this fluctuating wave of humanity. Side by side with the laborer stood the elegant lady in her silk robes; near the poor beggar in his ragged jacket were seen the high official and the wealthy banker in their rich dresses.

More than fifty thousand men were now assembled and waiting —waiting for what they knew not—for news—for a courier who could give the details. It was not enough to know that the king had conquered; they wished to know the extent and the significance of this victory; and lastly, they would know the bloody offering which this victory had cost.

The dinner-hour was passed. What cared this happy people for dinner? They hungered for no earthly food; they thirsted for no earthly drink; they were satisfied with the joy of victory. The clock struck three. Yes, there comes a horseman, his bridle is hanging loose—he is covered with dust—but how, what means this? His face is pale as death; his eyes are misty; he looks around shame-faced and confused. No happy news is written upon this dark and clouded brow. What means this messenger of death in the midst of joy, triumph, and proud consciousness of victory? They seek to hold him, to question him, but he gives no answer. He spurs his wearied horse till he springs aloft, and the men in rash terror are crushed against each other; but the horseman makes no sign. Silently he dashes on through the laughing, chatting crowd, but wherever he passes, laughter and smiles disappear, and speech is silenced.

It seemed as if the angel of death had touched his brow, and the happy ones shuddered at his untimely presence. Now he has reached the castle, he descends from his horse. In breathless silence, pallid, trembling they know not why, those who have seen this dumb messenger look up shudderingly to the balcony. At last, after long waiting, the Minister Herzberg appeared once more.

But, O God! what means this? he is pale—his eyes are filled with tears. He opens his mouth to speak, but strength has left him. He holds on to the bars of the balcony, otherwise he would sink. At last he collects himself. It is not necessary to ask for silence; the silence of the grave is upon those torpid men. He speaks! his voice is faint and weak, and trembles—oh, so fearfully! only a few in the first rank can hear his words.

"The battle is lost! The Russians have conquered! The Austrians came to their assistance! The presence of the Austrians was not known, they had their tents in holes in the ground! As our militia rushed upon the last intrenchment at Judenberg and were only a hundred steps distant, Loudon suddenly advanced with his fresh troops, against the worn-out and exhausted victors. He received the Prussians with so murderous a fire, that their ranks faltered, wavered, and, at last, broke loose in wild flight, pursued furiously by the raging enemy. The fortunes of the day had turned; we lost the battle. But all is not lost. The king lives! he is slightly wounded; three horses were shot under him. He lives, and so long as he lives, there is hope. In the far distance, in the midst of the terrible disasters which have befallen himself and his army, he thinks of his Berliners. He sends you a father's greeting, and exhorts every one of you to save his possessions, as far as possible. Those who do not feel safe in Berlin, and who fear the approaching

enemy, the king counsels to withdraw, if possible, with their money, to Magdeburg, where the royal family will take refuge this evening."

The minister was silent, and the people who had listened, dumb with horror, now broke out in wild cries of anguish and despair. Terror was written in every face; tears gushed from every eye. Cries of unspeakable agony burst from those lips, which, a few moments before, were eloquent with hope and gladness.

As if it were impossible to believe in these misfortunes without further confirmation, some men called loudly for the messenger, and the distant crowd, as if inspired with new hope, roared louder and louder:

"The courier! the courier! we will ourselves speak with the courier!"

The demand was so threatening, so continuous, it must be complied with. Herzberg stepped upon the balcony, and informed the crowd that the courier would at once descend to the public square.

A breathless silence succeeded; every eye was fixed upon the castle-gate, through which the courier must come. When he appeared, the crowd rushed forward toward him in mad haste. Cries of woe and suffering were heard. The people, wild—mad with pain, beside themselves with despair, had no longer any mercy, any pity for each other. They rushed upon the messenger of misfortune, without regarding those who, in the midst of this wild tumult, were cast down, and trodden under foot.

The messenger began his sad story. He repeated all that the minister had said; he told of the deadly strife, of the bloody havoc, of the raging advance of the Austrians, and of the roar for vengeance of the reassured Russians. He told how the cannon-balls of the enemy had stricken down whole ranks of Prussians; that more than twenty thousand dead and wounded Prussians lay upon the battle-field; that all the cannon and all the colors had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

The people received this news with tears, cries, and lamentations. The courier spoke also of the king. He, himself, had belonged to the body-guard of the king—had been ever near him. He had seen the king standing in the midst of the thickest shower of balls, when his two adjutants fell at his side. At last, a ball came and wounded the king's horse—the Vogel—so fearfully, that the brave steed fell. Frederick mounted another horse, but remained upon the same spot; a second ball wounded this horse, and the king quietly mounted that of Captain Götzen. At this moment, a bullet struck the king in the breast, but the golden *étui* which the king carried in his pocket, had turned it aside, and thus saved his life. In vain had the generals and adjutants entreated him to leave this

place, and think of his personal safety. His answer was—"We must seek, at this point, to win the battle. I must do my duty here with the rest." *

Many voices cried out—"Where is the king now?"

The courier did not answer; but the question was so fiercely, so stormily repeated, that he was compelled to go on.

"The king, in the midst of the confusion and horror of the flight, had called him, and commanded him to gallop to Berlin, and bear the fatal news to Minister Herzberg. He had then galloped by him, exactly against the enemy, as if he wished their balls to strike him; a little troop of his most faithful soldiers had followed!"

"The king is lost! the king is a prisoner—wounded—perhaps dead!" cried the terrified people.

Suddenly, the mad tumult was interrupted by loud shouts of joy, which swelled and thundered like an avalanche from the other side of the square. A fifth courier had arrived, and brought the news of the complete defeat of the Russians, and a glorious Prussian victory.

Now, one of those memorable, wondrous-grand scenes took place, which no earthly phantasy could contrive or prepare, to which only Providence could give form and color. As if driven by the storm-winds of every powerful earthly passion, this great sea of people fluctuated here and there. At one point, thousands were weeping over the news which the unhappy messenger had brought. Near by, thousands were huzzaing and shouting over the joyful intelligence brought by the fifth courier, while those who had been near enough to the fourth courier to understand his words, turned aside to give the sad news to those who were afar off. Coming at the same time from the other side, they were met by a mighty mass of men, who announced, with glad cries, the news of victory, brought by the fifth courier. Here you could see men, with their arms raised to heaven, thanking God for the hardly-won victory. A little farther on, pale, frightened creatures, motionless, bowed down, and grief-stricken. Here were women, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, shouting over their hero king. There, the people wept and moaned; their king had disappeared, was a prisoner, or dead. As at the Tower of Babel, the people spoke in a thousand tongues, and no one listened to another; every one was lost—blinded by his own passionate hopes and fears.

At last the two couriers were called upon to come face to face and decide these important questions. Strong men lifted them upon their shoulders and brought them together; a profound and fearful silence ensued, every man felt that he stood upon the eve of a mighty revelation; fifty thousand men were waiting breathlessly

*The king's own words.—See Thiébault, p. 214.

for news of happiness beyond compare, or of unspeakable woe. The conversation of the two horsemen standing upon the shoulders of their townsmen was quick and laconic.

"At what hour did the king send you off?" said the fourth courier to the fifth.

"At six. The king himself commissioned me."

"Where stood our army at that time?" said the fourth courier.

"They stood before the hollow ground, and the Russians had withdrawn to the intrenchments of Zudenberg; we had taken a hundred and twenty cannon, and many of our soldiers were wandering about the battle-field looking at the batteries they had taken."*

"Yes," said the fourth courier, sadly, "that was at *six*, but at *seven* we were in full flight. Loudon had risen from the ground, and the frightened, conquered Russians had recovered themselves. You left at six, I at eight; I have ridden more rapidly than you. Unhappily, I am right, the battle is lost!"

"The battle is lost!" howled the people; "the king is also lost! Woe! woe!"

At this moment the royal equipages were seen making their way slowly through the crowd, and the advance guard were praying the people to open a way for the travelling carriages to reach the castle.

These words excited new alarm. "We are lost! Let us fly, let us fly! The court, the queen, and the princesses flee—let us save ourselves! The Russians will come to Berlin—they will annihilate us. We are deserted and lost, lost!—no one knows where our king is!"

As if driven by madness, the crowds rushed against each other, like the sea when it divides, and in billowy streams pours itself out here and there; and the cry of anguish which now rang out from the castle square, found its echo in every street and every house.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE cannon were silenced, the discharges of musketry had ceased. On the great plain of Künersdorf, where, a few hours before, a bloody battle had been raging, all was quiet. Could this be called repose? How cruel was the tranquillity which rested now upon this fearful battle-field!

It was the peace of death—the stillness which the awful messenger of Heaven presses as a sign and seal of his love upon the pale

*Bodman.

lips of the dead. Happy they whose immortal spirits were quickly wafted away by the dread kiss—they no longer suffer. Woe to those who yet live, though they belong to death, and who lie surrounded by grinning corpses! The cold bodies of their comrades are the pillows upon which they lay their bloody heads. The groans of the dying form the awful melody which awakes them to consciousness; and the starry sky of this clear, transparent summer night is the only eye of love which bows down to them and looks upon them in their agony.

Happy those whom the murderous sword and the crushing ball carried off in an instant to the land of spirits! Woe, woe to those lying upon the battle-field, living, breathing, conscious of their defeat and of their great agony! Woe! woe! for they hear the sound of the tramping and neighing of horses—they come nearer and nearer. The moon throws the long, dark shadows of those advancing horsemen over the battle-field. It is fearful to see their rash approach; spurring on over thousands of pale corpses, not regarding the dying, who breathe out their last piteous sighs under the hoofs of these wild horses.

The Cossack has no pity; he does not shudder or draw back from this monstrous open grave, which has received thousands of men as if they were one great corpse. The Cossack has come to rob and to plunder; he spares neither friend nor foe. He is the heir of the dead and of the dying, and he has come for his inheritance. If he sees a ring sparkling upon the hand of a grinning corpse, he springs from his horse and tears it off. If his greedy, cruel eye rests upon a rich uniform he seizes it, he tears it off from the bleeding, wounded body, no matter whether it is dead or still breathing and rattling.

Look at that warrior who, groaning with anguish, his limbs torn to pieces, bleeding from a thousand wounds, is lying in an open grave; he is wounded to death; he still holds his sword in his left hand—his right arm has been torn off by a cannon-ball, a shot has crushed his legs, and his comrades have placed him in this grave that he might not be trampled upon by the horses' hoofs; they are forced to leave him in the hands of God and o the mercy of man.

But the Cossack knows no mercy. That is a word he has never heard in his Russian home; he has no fear of God before his eyes—he fears the Czar and his captain, and above all other things, he fears the knout. He knows nothing of pity, for it has never been shown him—how then should he exercise it?

When the Cossack saw the Prussian officer in his gold-embroidered uniform, he sprang from his horse and threw the bridle over him; a shrill whistle told the wild steed, the Cossack's better half, that he must stand still. He sprang into the grave where the Prus-

sian warrior, the German poet, was laid to rest. Yes, a great German poet lies there—a poet by the grace of God. All Germany knows him, "their songster of the spring." All Germany had read and been inspired by his lays. The Austrian and the Saxon considered the Prussian Major Ewald von Kleist their enemy, but they loved and admired the poet, Ewald von Kleist. The people are never enemies to poesy, and even politics are silent before her melodious voice.

There he lies, the gallant warrior, the inspired, noble poet; his broken eyes are turned to heaven; his blue, cold lips are opened and wearily stammering a few disconnected words. Perhaps he thinks in this last hour of the last words of his last poem. Perhaps his stiffening lips murmured these words which his mangled hand had written just before the battle:

"Death for one's fatherland is ever honorable.
How gladly will I die that noble death
When my destiny calls!"

Yes, death might have been beautiful, but fate is never propitious to German poets. It would have been noble and sweet to die in the wild tumult of battle, under the sound of trumpets, amid the shouts of victory; sweet thus, with a smile upon the lip to yield up the immortal spirit.

Ewald von Kleist, the German poet, received his death-wound upon the field of battle, but he did not die there; he lives, he knows that the battle is lost, that his blood has been shed in vain. The Cossack has come down into his grave—with greedy eyes he gazes at the rich booty. This bleeding, mangled body—this is to the Cossack not a man, it is only a uniform which is his; with hands trembling with greed he tears it from the quivering, bleeding form. What to him is the death-rattle and the blood—even the bloody shirt excites the covetousness of the barbarian, and he tears it from the dying frame.*

The Prussian warrior, the German poet, lay there naked, his own blood alone covered his wounded body, wrapped it in a purple mantle, worthy of the poet's crown with which his countrymen had decked his brow.

But Ewald von Kleist is no longer a poet or a hero—he is a poor, suffering, tortured child of earth; he lies on the damp ground, he pleads for a few rags to cover his wounds, into which the muddy water of the hole in which he lies is rushing.

And now fate seems favorable. A Russian officer is riding by—he takes pity on the naked man with the gaping wounds; he throws

* "History of the Seven Years' War."—Thiébault, 363.

him a soldier's old mantle, a piece of bread, and a half gulden.* The German poet receives the alms of the Russian thankfully—he covers himself with the cloak, he tries to eat the bread.

But destiny is never propitious to German poets. The Cossacks swarm again upon the battle-field, and again they approach the groaning warrior in the open grave; he has no longer a glittering uniform, but the Cossack takes all; the poor old mantle excites his greed—he tears it from the unresisting soldier; he opens his hands and takes out the half gulden which Ewald von Kleist had received from the Russian hussar.

Again he lies naked, again the muddy water forces into his wounds, and adds cruel torture to the agonies of death. So lies he till the next day, till the enemy takes pity upon him and carries him as a prisoner to Frankfort. †

Happy those who meet with sudden death. It is true all the living did not share the cruel fate of Ewald von Kleist, but all those thousands who were borne wounded and bleeding from the battle-field were conscious of their sufferings and their defeat.

The little village of Octshef near the battle-field was a hospital. During the battle all the inhabitants had fled. The wounded had taken possession of the huts and the surgeons were hastening from house to house giving relief where it was possible. No one entered into those two little huts which lay at the other end of the village, somewhat separated from the others. And yet those huts contained two wounded men. They had been brought here during the battle—the surgeon had examined their wounds and gone out silently, never to return. Groaning from time to time, these two wounded men lay upon the straw, their eyes fixed upon the door, longing for the surgeon to bring them help, or at least alleviation.

And now the door was indeed opened, and an officer entered. Was it the obscurity of twilight, or had blood and pain blinded the eyes of the wounded men so that they could not recognize the stranger? It was true his noble and generally cheerful face was now grave and stern, his cheeks were ashy pale, and his great, flashing eyes were dim; but there was still something inexpressibly majestic and commanding in his appearance—though defeated and cast down, he was still a hero, a king—Frederick the Great!

Frederick had come to take up his quarters in this lonely hut, to be alone in his great grief; but when he saw the two wounded men,

*"Seven Years' War," 253.

†Ewald von Kleist died a few days after this, on the 24th of August. The Russians gave him an honorable burial; and as there was no sword upon his coffin, Captain Bulow, chief of the Russian dragoons, took his own from his side and placed it upon the bier, saying, "So worthy an officer shall not be buried without every mark of honor."—Archenholtz, 262.

his expression changed to one of earnest sympathy. With hasty steps he drew near to the two officers, bowed over and questioned them kindly. They recognized his voice—that voice which had so often inspired them to bold deeds in the wild whirl of battle, but whose tones were now mild and sympathetic.

"The king!" cried both in joyful surprise, and forgetting their wounds and helplessness, they strove to rise, but sank back with hollow groans, with the blood streaming anew from their wounds.

"Poor children," said Frederick, "you are badly wounded."

"Yes," groaned Lieutenant von Grabow, "badly wounded, but that is of small consequence, if, your majesty, we only knew that we had gained the day. We had taken two redoubts, and were storming the third, when this misfortune befell us. Tell us, your majesty, is it not true? Is not the victory ours?"

A dark shadow passed over the face of the king, but soon disappeared.

"You must now think only of yourselves. You have proved that you are brave—the rest is accident or fate. Do not despond, all will be well. Have your wounds been dressed? Have you been fed?"

"Ah, sire, no devil will dress our wounds," groaned Lieutenant von Hubenfall.

"How," cried the king, "have they left you here without care and assistance?"

"Yes, sire, there is no earthly hope for us."

The king was about to answer, when several people, bearing hand-barrows, accompanied by a surgeon, entered.

"What do you wish?" said the king, angrily.

"Sire," answered the surgeon, "we will remove the wounded, as your majesty will make your night-quarters here."

The king threw a scornful glance upon them.

"And you suppose that I will allow this? The wounded men remain here. I will seek shelter elsewhere. But, above all things, examine the wounds of these two officers at once, and dress them."

The surgeon advanced, and examined them carefully, then drew near the king.

"Your majesty," said he, shrugging his shoulders, "it would be all in vain. A cannon-ball has torn off the right arm of one of these men, and he must die of gangrene. The other has a cartridge-load of iron in his face and in his body. It is impossible to bind up these wounds."

The king did not answer him. He stepped hastily to the straw-bed, and took both the wounded men by the hand. Then, turning to the surgeon, he said—

"Look, now, these two men are young and powerful—they have

no fever. With such young blood and fresh hearts Nature often does wonders. Dress them, and bind up their wounds, and, above all things, see that they have nourishment—they have need of it."

"Ah, yes, your majesty; we have been hungry and thirsty a long time," said Grabow.

The king smiled. "See, now, you think they are lost, and yet they have healthy stomachs; so long as a man is hungry he will not die."

The surgeon opened his case of instruments and commenced to dress the wounds. The king watched him for a long time, then stooped down and said, tenderly, "Children, do not despair; I will learn how it goes with you, and if you are no longer fit for service, I will take care of you. Believe that I will not forget you." He bowed kindly and left the room. His adjutants were awaiting him at the door of the tent.*

The king signed to them to follow him, and stepping rapidly through the village, he passed by the huts from which loud cries of anguish and low murmurs were heard.

"Ah," cried Frederick, "Dante did not know all the horrors of hell, or he forgot to paint those I now suffer." He hastened on—on—on, in the obscure twilight of the summer night, pursued by the sighs and groans of his dying and wounded soldiers; a deep, immeasurable sadness lay upon his brow; his lips were trembling; cold perspiration stood upon his forehead; his eyes wandered over the battle-field, then were raised to heaven with a questioning and reproachful expression. Already the village lay far behind him; but he hurried on, he had no aim, no object; he wished only to escape this hell, this cry of despair and woe from the condemned. An adjutant dared at last to step forward and awake him from his sad mood.

"Sire," said he, "the Cossacks are swarming in every direction, and if your majesty goes on, the most fearful results may be anticipated. The Cossacks shoot at every man who wears a good coat."

The king shook his head sadly. "There is no ball for me," said he in a low tone; "I have in vain called upon death. I have prayed in mercy for a ball; it came, but it only grazed my breast. No, no—there is no ball for me!" He advanced, and the adjutant dared once more to interrupt him.

"Sire," said he, "will not your majesty seek night-quarters?"

*The king's own words. The whole scene is historical. These two officers, whom the king saved in this way from death, recovered rapidly. After they were completely restored, they again took part in the contest, and were again severely wounded at Kolberg. They served until peace was declared, and then retired on the invalid list, and, by the express order of the king, were most kindly cared for.—See Nicolai.

Frederick raised his head, and was in the act of answering nastily, then said: "Yes, I need night-quarters." He looked around and saw an empty peasant's house by the wayside, drew near and entered silently.

CHAPTER XII.

A HEROIC SOUL.

"I WILL pass the night here," said he, "the place appears deserted; we will disturb no one."

The king was right. The miserable old hut was empty. No one advanced to meet him as he entered. In one corner of the room there was some dirty straw; in the other a wooden table and stool —this was all.

"It suffices for me," said the king, smiling. "I will pass the night here. Have you my writing materials with you?"

"I sent Adjutant von Goltz for them, sire, as I did not wish to leave you alone."

Goltz now entered with the king's portfolio, and informed him that he had brought two grenadiers to guard the house.

"Have I still grenadiers?" murmured the king, in a trembling voice. His head fell upon his breast, and he stood thus lost in deep thought for a while. "Gentlemen," said he, at length, "inspect the house. See if there is a more comfortable room than this; if not, I suppose we can manage to sleep here. Send one of the guard for some soldiers, by whom I can forward my dispatches."

The adjutants bowed, and left the room. The king was alone. He could at last give way to his despair—his grief.

"All, all is lost!" murmured the king, and a voice within him answered: "When all is lost, there is no escape but death! It is unworthy to continue a life without fame, without glory. The grave alone is a resting-place for the broken-hearted, humiliated man!"

The king listened attentively to this voice. He had borne with patience the sorrows and deprivations of the past years, but he could not survive the ruin of his country. His country was lost. There was no chance of saving it; his army was gone. The victorious enemy had taken all the neighboring provinces. The Russians could now march undisturbed to Berlin. They would find no resistance, for the garrison there consisted of invalids and cripples.

Berlin was lost! Prussia was lost! The king was resolved to die, for he was a king without a crown, a hero without laurels. He

wished to die, for he could not survive the destruction of his country. But first he must arrange his affairs, make his will, and bid adieu to his friends. The king opened the door hastily, and desired that a light should be brought—it was no easy thing to procure in this dismal, deserted village. The adjutant succeeded at last, however, in getting a few small tallow candles, and placing them in old bottles, in the absence of candlesticks of any description, he carried them to the king. Frederick did not observe him; he stood at the open window, gazing earnestly at the starry firmament. The bright light aroused him; he turned, and approached the table.

"My last letters!" murmured he, sinking upon the wooden stool, and opening his portfolio.

How his enemies would have rejoiced, could they have seen him in that wretched hovel! He first wrote to General Fink, to whom he wished to leave the command of his army. He must fulfil the duties of state, before those of friendship. It was not a letter—rather an order to General Fink, and read as follows:

"General Fink will find this a weary and tedious commission. The army I leave is no longer in a condition to defend itself from the Russians. Haddeck will hasten to Berlin. Loudon also, I presume. If you intercept them, the Russians will be in your rear; if you remain by the Oder, Haddeck will surround you. I nevertheless believe, were Loudon to come to Berlin, you could attack and defeat him. This, were it possible, would give you time to arrange matters, and I can assure you, time is every thing, in such desperate circumstances as ours. Köper, my secretary, will give you the dispatches from Torgau and Dresden. You must acquaint my brother, whom I make general-in-chief of the army, with all that passes. In the mean time, his orders must be obeyed. The army must swear by my nephew. This is the only advice I am able to give. Had I any resources, I would stand fast by you.

"FREDERICK."*

"Yes, I would have stood by them," murmured the king, as he folded and addressed his letter. "I would have borne still longer this life of oppression and privation; but now, honor demands that I should die."

He took another sheet of paper. It was now no order or command, but a tender, loving, farewell letter to his friend, General Finkenstein.

"This morning, at eleven o'clock, I attacked the enemy; we drove them back to Gudenberg. All my men performed deeds of daring and bravery, but, at the storming of Gudenberg, a terrific number of lives were lost. My army became separated. I reassem-

*The king's own words.

bled them three times, but in vain. At last, they fled in wild disorder. I very nearly became a prisoner, and was obliged to leave the field to the enemy. My uniform was torn by the cannon-balls, two horses were shot underneath me, but death shunned me; I seemed to bear a charmed life; I could not die! From an army of forty-eight thousand men, there now remains three thousand. The consequences of this battle will be more fearful than the battle itself. It is a terrible misfortune, and I will not survive it. There is no one to whom I can look for help. I cannot survive my country's ruin. Farewell!"

"And now," said the king, when he had sealed and directed his letter, "now I am ready; my worldly affairs are settled. I am at the end of my sufferings, and dare claim that last, deep rest granted by Nature to us all. I have worked enough, suffered enough; and if, after a life of stormy disasters, I seek my grave, no one can say it was cowardly not to live—for all the weight of life rolled upon me, forced me to the ground, and the grave opened beneath my feet. I continued to hope, when overwhelmed with defeat at every point. Every morning brought new clouds, new sorrows. I bore it courageously, trusting that misfortune would soon weary, the storms blow over, and a clear, cloudless sky envelop me. I deceived myself greatly; my sorrows increased. And now, the worst has happened; my country is lost! Who dares say I should survive this loss? To die at the proper time is also a duty. The Romans felt this, and acted upon it. I am a true scholar of the old masters, and wish to prove myself worthy of them. When all is lost, the liberty to die should not be denied. The world has nothing more to do with me, and I laugh at her weak, unjust laws. Like Tiberius, will I live and die! Farewell, then, thou false existence; farewell, weak man! Ah! there are so many fools—so few men amongst you; I have found so many faithless friends, so many traitors, so few honest men! In the hour of misfortune they all deserted me! But, no!" said he; "one remained true. D'Argens never deceived me, and I had almost forgotten to take leave of him. Well, death must wait for me, while I write to D'Argens!"

A heavenly inspiration now beamed on his countenance; his eyes shone like stars. The holy muse had descended to comfort the despairing hero, to whisper loving and precious words to him. Thus standing at death's portals, Frederick wrote his most beautiful poem, called "*Ami le sort en est jeté.*" A great wail of woe burst from his soul. The sorrows, the grievances hid until now from all, he portrayed in touching, beautiful words to his absent friend. He pictured to him his sufferings, his hopes, his struggles, and finally, his determination to die. When all this had been

painted in the most glowing colors, when his wounds were laid bare, he wrote a last and touching farewell to his friend:

"Adieu, D'Argens! dans ce tableau,
De mon trépas tu vois la cause;
Au moins ne pense pas du néant du caveau,
Que j'aspire à l'apothéose.
Tout ce que l'amitié par ces vers propose,
C'est que tant qu'ici-bas le céleste flambeau;
Eclairera tes jours tandis que je repose,
Et lorsque le printemps paraissant de nouveau.
De son sein abondant t'offre les fleurs écloses,
Chaque fois d'un bouquet de myrthes et de roses,
Tu daignes parer mon tombeau." *

"Ah!" murmured the king, as he folded and addressed his poetical lettter, "how lovely it must now be at Sans-Souci! Well, well! my grave shall be there, and D'Argens will cover it with flowers. And have I no other friends at Sans-Souci? My good old hounds, my crippled soldiers! They cannot come to me, but I will go to them."

The king then arose, opened the door, and asked if a messenger was in readiness; receiving an answer in the affirmative, he gave the three letters to the adjutant. "And now my work is finished," said he, "now I can die." He took from his breast-pocket a small casket of gold which he always carried with him, and which, in the late battle, had served him as a shield against the enemy's balls. The lid had been hollowed in by a ball; strange to say, this casket, which had saved his life, was now to cause his death. For within it there was a small vial containing three pills of the most deadly poison, which the king had kept with him since the beginning of the war. The king looked at the casket thoughtfully. "Death here fought against death; and still how glorious it would have been to die upon the battle-field believing myself the victor!" He held the vial up to the light and shook it; and as the pills bounded up and down, he said, smiling sadly, "Death is merry! It comes eagerly to invite me to the dance. Well, well, my gay cavalier, I am ready for the dance."

He opened the vial and emptied the pills into his hand. Then arose and approached the window to see once more the sky with its glittering stars and its brightly-beaming moon, and the battle-field upon which thousands of his subjects had this day found their death. Then raised the hand with the pills. What was it that caused him to hesitate? Why did his hand fall slowly down? What were his eyes so intently gazing on?

* See note, page 572.

The king was not gazing at the sky, the stars, or the moon; but far off into the distance, at the Austrian camp-fires. There were the conquerors, there was Soltikow and Loudon with their armies. The king had observed these fires before entering the hut, but their number had now increased, a sign that the enemy had not advanced, but was resting. How? Was it possible that the enemy, not taking advantage of their victory, was not following the conquered troops, but giving them time to rally, to outmarch them, perhaps time to reach the Spree, perhaps Berlin?

"If this is so," said the king, answering his own thoughts, "if the enemy neglects to give me the finishing-blow, all is not lost. If there is a chance of salvation for my country, I must not die; she needs me, and it is my duty to do all in my power to retrieve the past."

He looked again at the camp-fires, and a bright smile played about his lips.

"If those fires speak aright," said he, "my enemies are more generous—or more stupid—than I thought, and many advantages may still be derived from this lost battle. If so, I must return to my old motto that 'life is a duty.' And so long as good, honorable work is to be done, man has no right to seek the lazy rest of the grave. I must ascertain at once if my suspicions are correct. Death may wait awhile. As long as there is a necessity for living, I cannot die."

He returned the pills to the vial and hid the casket in its former resting-place. Then passing hastily through the room, he opened the door. The two adjutants were sitting upon the wooden bench in front of the hut; both were asleep. The grenadiers were pacing with even tread up and down before the house; deep quiet prevailed. The king stood at the door looking in amazement at the glorious scene before him. He inhaled with delight the soft summer air; never had it seemed to him so balmy, so full of strengthening power, and he acknowledged that never had the stars, the moon, the sky looked as beautiful. With lively joy he felt the night-wind toying with his hair. The king would not tire of all this; it seemed to him as if a friend, dead long since, mourned and bewailed, had suddenly appeared to him beaming with health, and as if he must open his arms and say, "Welcome, thou returned one. Fate separated us; but now, as we have met, we will never leave one another, but cling together through life and death, through good and evil report."

Life was the friend that appeared to Frederick, and he now felt his great love for it. Raising his eyes in a sort of ecstasy to the sky, he murmured, "I swear not to seek death unless at the last ex-

tremity, if, when made a prisoner, I cannot escape. I swear to live, to suffer, so long as I am free."

He had assumed the harness of life, and was determined to battle bravely with it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO GRENADIERS.

SMILING, and with elastic step, the king advanced to meet the two grenadiers, who stood rooted to the spot as he approached them.

"Grenadiers," said he, "why are you not with your comrades?"

"Our comrades fled," said one.

"It is dishonorable to fly," said the other.

The king was startled. These voices were familiar, he had surely heard them before.

"I ought to know you," said he; "this is not the first time we have spoken together. What is your name, my son?"

"Fritz Kober is my name," said the grenadier.

"And yours?"

"Charles Henry Buschman," said the other.

"You are not mistaken, sir king! we have met and spoken before, but it was on a better night than this."

"Where was it?" said the king.

"The night before the great, the glorious battle of Leuthen," said Fritz Kober, gravely; "at that time, sir king, you sat at our tent-fire and ate dumplings with us. Charles Henry knows how to cook them so beautifully!"

"Ah! I remember," said the king; "you made me pay my share of the costs."

"And you did so, like a true king," said Fritz Kober. "Afterward you came back to our tent-fire, and Charles Henry Buschman told you fairy tales; nobody can do that so beautifully as Charles Henry, and you slept refreshingly throughout."

"No, no, grenadier," said the king, "I did not sleep, and I can tell you to-day all that Charles Henry related."

"Well, what was it?" said Fritz Kober, with great delight.

The king reflected a moment, and then said, in a soft voice:

"He told of a king who was so fondly loved by a beautiful fairy, that she changed herself into a sword when the king went to war and helped him to defeat his enemies. Is that it, Fritz Kober?"

"Nearly so, sir king; I wish you had such a fairy at your side to-day."

"Still, Fritz," whispered Charles Henry Buschman, "our king does not need the help of a fairy; our king can maintain his own cause, and God is with his sword."

"Do you truly believe that, my son?" said the king, deeply moved. "Have you still this great confidence in me? Do you still believe that I can sustain myself and that God is with me?"

"We have this confidence, and we will never lose it!" cried Charles Henry, quickly. "Our enemies over there have no Frederick to lead them on, no commander-in-chief to share with them hunger and thirst, and danger and fatigue; therefore they cannot love their leaders as we do ours."

"And then," said Fritz Kober, thoughtfully, "I am always thinking that this war is like a battle of the cats and hounds. Sometimes it looks as if the little cats would get the better of the great bulldogs; they have sharp claws, and scratch the dogs in the face till they can neither see nor hear, and must for a while give way; they go off, however, give themselves a good shake, and open their eyes, and spring forward as great and strong and full of courage as ever; they seize upon the poor cats in the nape of the neck and bite them deadly with their strong, powerful teeth. What care they if the cats do scratch in the mean while? No, no, sir king, the cats cannot hold out to the end; claws are neither so strong nor so lasting as teeth."

"Yes," said the king, laughing, "but how do you know but our foes over there are the hounds and we are the little cats?"

"What!" cried Fritz Kober, amazed, "we shall be the cats? No, no, sir king, we are the great hounds."

"But how can you prove this?"

"How shall I prove it?" said Fritz Kober, somewhat embarrassed. After a short pause, he cried out, gayly, "I have it—I will prove it. Those over there are the cats because they are Russians and Austrians, and do not serve a king as we do; they have only two empresses, two women. Now, sir king, am I not right? Women and cats, are they not alike? So those over there are the cats and we are the bulldogs!"

Frederick was highly amused. "Take care," said he, "that 'those over there' do not hear you liken their empresses to cats."

"And if they are empresses," said Fritz Kober, dryly, "they are still women, and women are cats."

The king looked over toward the camp-fires, which were boldly shining on the horizon.

"How far is it from here to those fires?" said he.

"About an hour," said Charles Henry, "not more."

"One hour," repeated the king, softly. "In one hour, then, I

could know my fate! Listen, children, which of you will go for me?"

Both exclaimed in the same moment, "I will!"

"It is a fearful attempt," said the king, earnestly; "the Cossacks are swarming in every direction, and if you escape them, you may be caught in the camp and shot as spies."

"I will take care that they shall not recognize me as an enemy," said Charles Henry, quietly.

"I also," said Fritz Kober, zealously. "You stay, Charles Henry, we dare not both leave the king. You know that only this evening, while upon the watch, we swore that, even if the whole army of the enemy marched against us, we would not desert our king, but would stand at our post as long as there was a drop of blood in our veins or a breath in our bodies."

The king laid his hands upon the two soldiers and looked at them with much emotion. The moon, which stood great and full in the heavens, lighted up this curious group, and threw three long, dark shadows over the plain.

"And you have sworn that, my children?" said the king, after a long pause. "Ah, if all my men thought as you do we would not have been defeated this day."

"Sir king, your soldiers all think as we do, but fate was against us. Just as I said, the cats outnumbered us to-day, but we will bite them bravely for it next time. And now tell me, sir king, what shall I do over there in the camp?"

Before the king could answer, Charles Henry laid his hand upon his arm.

"Let me go," said he, entreatingly; "Fritz Kober is so daring, so undaunted, he is not cautious; they will certainly shoot him, and then you have lost the best soldier in your army."

"Your loss, I suppose, would not be felt; the king can do without you."

"Listen, children," said the king, "it is best that you both go; one can protect the other, and four ears are better than two."

"The king is right, that is best—we will both go."

"And leave the king alone and unguarded?"

"No," said the king, pointing to the two sleepers, "I have my two adjutants, and they will keep guard for me. Now, listen to what I have to say to you. Over there is the enemy, and it is most important for me to know what he is doing, and what he proposes to do. Go, then, and listen. Their generals have certainly taken up their quarters in the village. You must ascertain that positively, and then draw near their quarters. You will return as quickly as possible, and inform me of all that you hear and see."

"Is that all?" said Fritz Kober.

"That is all. Now be off, and if you do your duty well, and return fresh and in good order, you shall be both made officers."

Fritz Kober laughed aloud. "No, no, sir king, we know that old story already."

"It is not necessary that you should promise us any thing, your majesty," said Charles Henry; "we do not go for a reward, but for respect and love to our king."

"But tell me, Fritz Kober, why you laughed so heartily?" said the king.

"Because this is not the first time that your majesty has promised to make us officers. Before the battle of Leuthen, you said if we were brave and performed valiant deeds, you would make us officers. Well, we were brave. Charles Henry took seven prisoners, and I took nine; but we are not officers."

"You shall be to-morrow," said the king. "Now, hasten off, and come back as quickly as possible."

"We will leave our muskets here," said Charles Henry; "we dare not visit our enemies in Prussian array."

They placed their arms at the house door, and then clasping each other's hands, and making a military salute, they hastened off.

The king looked after them till their slender forms were lost in the distance.

"With fifty thousand such soldiers I could conquer the world," murmured he; "they are of the true metal."

He turned, and stepping up to the two sleepers, touched them lightly on the shoulders. They sprang up alarmed when they recognized the king.

"You need not excuse yourselves," said Frederick kindly, "you have had a day of great fatigue, and are, of course, exhausted. Come into the house, the night air is dangerous; we will sleep here together."

"Where are the two grenadiers?" said Goltz.

"I have sent them off on duty."

"Then your majesty must allow us to remain on guard. I have slept well, and am entirely refreshed."

"I also," said the second lieutenant. "Will your majesty be pleased to sleep? we will keep guard."

"Not so," said the king, "the moon will watch over us all. Come in."

"But it is impossible that your majesty should sleep thus, entirely unguarded. The first Cossack that dashes by could take aim at your majesty through the window."

Frederick shook his head gravely. "The ball which will strike

me will come from above,* and that you cannot intercept. No, it is better to have no watch before the door; we will not draw the attention of troops passing by to this house. I think no one will suppose that this miserable and ruinous barrack, through which the wind howls, is the residence of a king. Come, then, messieurs." He stepped into the hut, followed by the two adjutants, who dared no longer oppose him. "Put out that light," said the king, "the moon will be our torch, and will glorify our bed of straw." He drew his sword, and grasping it firmly in his right hand, he stretched himself upon the straw. "There is room for both of you—lie down. Good-night, sirs."

Frederick slightly raised his three-cornered hat in greeting, and then laid it over his face as a protection from the moonlight and the cold night air. The adjutants laid down silently at his feet, and soon no sound was heard in the room but the loud breathing of the three sleepers.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RIGHT COUNSEL.

Hand in hand the two grenadiers advanced directly toward the battle-field. Before they could approach the enemy's camp they must borrow two Austrian uniforms from the dead upon the plain. It was not difficult, amongst so many dead bodies, to find two Austrian officers, and the two Prussian grenadiers went quickly to work to rob the dead and appropriate their garments.

"I don't know how it is," said Charles Henry, shuddering, "a cold chill thrills through me when I think of putting on a coat which I have just taken from a dead body. It seems to me the marble chillness of the corpse will insinuate itself into my whole body, and that I shall never be warm again."

Fritz Kober looked up with wide-open eyes! "You have such curious thoughts, Charles Henry, such as come to no other man: but you are right, it is a frosty thing." And now he had removed the uniform and was about to draw off his own jacket and assume the white coat of the Austrian. "It is a great happiness" said he, "that we need not change our trousers, a little clearer or darker gray can make no difference in the night."

Charles Henry was in the act of drawing on the coat of the dead man, when Fritz Kober suddenly seized his arm and held him back "Stop," said he, "you must do me a favor—this coat is too narrow,

*The king's own words.—See Nicolai, p. 118.

and it pinches me fearfully; you are thinner than I am, and I think it will fit you exactly; take it and give me yours." He jerked off the coat and handed it to his friend.

"No, no, Fritz Kober," said Charles Henry, in a voice so soft and sweet, that Fritz was confused and bewildered by it. "No, Fritz, I understand you fully. You have the heart of an angel; you only pretend that this coat is too narrow for you that you may induce me to take the one you have already warmed."

It was well that Fritz had his back turned to the moon, otherwise his friend would have seen that his face was crimson; he blushed as if detected in some wicked act. However, he tore the uniform away from Charles Henry rather roughly, and hastened to put it on.

"Folly," said he, "the coat squeezes me, that is all! Besides, it is not wise to fool away our time in silly talking. Let us go onward."

"Directly over the battle-field?" said Charles Henry, shuddering.

"Directly over the battle-field," said Kober, "because that is the nearest way."

"Come, then," said Charles, giving him his hand.

It was indeed a fearful path through which they must walk. They passed by troops of corpses—by thousands of groaning, rattling, dying men—by many severely wounded, who cried out to them piteously for mercy and help! Often Charles Henry hesitated and stood still to offer consolation to the unhappy wretches, but Fritz Kober drew him on. "We cannot help them, and we have far to go!" Often the swarming Cossacks, dashing around on their agile little ponies, called to them from afar off in their barbarous speech, but when they drew near and saw the Austrian uniforms, they passed them quietly, and were not surprised they had not given the pass-word.

At last they passed the battle-field, and came on the open plain, at the end of which they perceived the camp-fires of the Russians and Austrians. The nearer they approached, the more lively was the scene. Shouts, laughter, loud calls, and outcries—from time to time a word of command. And in the midst of this mad confusion, here and there soldiers were running, market-women offering them wares cheap, and exulting soldiers assembling around the camp-fires. From time to time the regular step of the *patrouille* was heard, who surrounded the camp, and kept a watchful eye in every direction.

Arm in arm they passed steadily around the camp. "One thing I know," whispered Fritz Kober, "they have no thought of marching. They will pass a quiet, peaceful night by their camp-fires."

"I agree with you," said Charles Henry, "but let us go forward and listen a little; perhaps we can learn where the generals are quartered."

"Look, look! it must be there," said Fritz Kober, hastily. "There are no camp-fires; but there is a brilliant light in the peasants' huts, and it appears to me that I see a guard before the doors. These, certainly, are the headquarters."

"Let us go there, then," said Charles Henry; "but we must approach the houses from behind, and thus avoid the guard."

They moved cautiously around, and drew near the houses. Profound quiet reigned in this neighborhood; it was the reverence of subordination—the effect which the presence of superior officers ever exercises upon their men. Here stood groups of officers, lightly whispering together—there soldiers were leading their masters' horses; not far off orderlies were waiting on horseback—sentinels with shouldered arms were going slowly by. The attention of all seemed to be fixed upon the two small houses, and every glance and every ear was turned eagerly toward the brilliantly lighted windows.

"We have hit the mark exactly," whispered Fritz Kober; he had succeeded with his friend in forcing his way into the little alley which separated the two houses. "We have now reached the headquarters of the generals. Look! there is an Austrian sentinel with his bear's cap. Both the Austrian and Russian generals are here."

"Let us watch the Russians a little through the window," said Charles Henry, slipping forward.

They reached the corner, and were hidden by the trunk of a tree which overshadowed the huts. Suddenly they heard the word of command, and there was a general movement among the files of soldiers assembled about the square. The officers placed themselves in rank, the soldiers presented arms; for, at this moment, the Austrian General Loudon, surrounded by his staff, stepped from one of the small houses into the square. The Cossacks, who were crouched down on the earth before the door, raised themselves, and also presented arms.

While Loudon stood waiting, the two Prussian grenadiers slipped slyly to the other hut.

"Let us go behind," whispered Charles Henry. "There are no sentinels there, and perhaps we may find a door, and get into the house."

Behind the hut was a little garden whose thick shrubs and bushes gave complete concealment to the two grenadiers. Noiselessly they sprang over the little fence, and made a reconnoissance of the *terrain*—unseen, unnoticed, they drew near the house. As they stepped

from behind the bushes, Fritz Kober seized his friend's arm, and with difficulty suppressed a cry of joy.

The scene which was presented to them was well calculated to rejoice the hearts of brave soldiers. They had reached the goal, and might now hope to fulfil the wishes of their king. The quarters of the Russian general were plainly exposed to them. In this great room, which was evidently the ball-room of the village, at a long oak-table, in the middle of the room, sat General Soltikow, and around him sat and stood the generals and officers. At the door, half a dozen Cossacks were crouching, staring sleepily on the ground. The room was brilliantly illuminated with wax-lights, and gave the two grenadiers an opportunity of seeing it in every part. Fate appeared to favor them in every way, and gave them an opportunity to hear as well as see. The window on the garden was opened to give entrance to the cool night air, and near it there was a thick branch of a tree in which a man could conceal himself.

"Look there," said Charles Henry, "I will hide in that tree. We will make our observations from different stand-points. Perhaps one of us may see what escapes the other. Let us attend closely, that we may tell all to our king."

No man in this room guessed that in the silent little garden four flashing eyes were observing all that passed.

At the table sat the Russian commander-in-chief, surrounded by his generals and officers. Before him lay letters, maps, and plans, at which he gazed from time to time, while he dictated an account of the battle to the officer sitting near him, Soltikow was preparing a dispatch for the Empress Elizabeth. A few steps farther off, in stiff military bearing, stood the officers who were giving in their reports, and whose statements brought a dark cloud to the brow of the victorious commander. Turning with a hasty movement of the head to the small man with the gold-embroidered uniform and the stiffly-frizzed wig, he said—

"Did you hear that, sir marquis? Ten thousand of my brave soldiers lie dead upon the battle-field, and as many more are severely wounded."

"It follows then," said the Marquis Montalembert, the French commissioner between the courts of Vienna, Petersburg, and Paris, "it follows then, that the king of Prussia has forty thousand dead and wounded, and, consequently, his little army is utterly destroyed "

"Who knows?" said Soltikow; "the king of Prussia is accustomed to sell his defeats dearly. I should not be at all surprised if he had lost fewer soldiers than we have."*

*Soltikow's own words —See Archenholtz, p. 206.

"Well, I think he has now nothing more to lose," said the marquis, laughing; "it rests with you to give the last *coup de grâce* to this conquered and flying king, and forever prevent—"

The entrance of an officer interrupted him. The officer announced General von Loudon.

Solitkow arose, and advanced to the door to welcome the Austrian general. A proud smile was on his face as he gave his hand to Loudon; he did this with the air of a gracious superior who wished to be benevolent to his subordinate.

The quick, firm glance of Loudon seemed to read the haughty heart of his ally, and, no doubt for this reason, he scarcely touched Soltikow's hand. With erect head and proud step he advanced into the middle of the room.

"I resolved to come to your excellency," said Loudon, in a sharp, excited tone; "you have a large room, while in my hut I could scarcely find accommodation for you and your adjutants."

"You come exactly at the right hour," said Soltikow, with a haughty smile; "you see, we were about to hold a council of war, and consider what remains to be done."

A dark and scornful expression was seen in Loudon's countenance, and his eyes rested fiercely upon the smiling face of Soltikow.

"Impossible, general! you could not have held a council of war without me," said he, angrily.

"Oh, be composed, general," said Soltikow, smiling, "I would, without doubt, have informed you immediately of our conclusions."

"I suppose you could not possibly have come to any conclusion in my absence," said Loudon, the veins in whose forehead began to swell.

Soltikow bowed low, wth the same unchanged and insolent smile.

"Let us not dispute about things which have not yet taken place, your excellency. The council of war had not commenced, but now that you are here, we may begin. Allow me, however, first to sign these dispatches which I have written to my gracious sovereign, announcing the victory which the Russian troops have this day achieved over the army of the King of Prussia."

"Ah, general, this time I am in advance of you," cried Loudon; "the dispatches are already sent off in which I announced to my empress the victory which the Austrian troops gained over the Prussians."

Soltikow threw his head back scornfully, and his little gray eyes flashed at the Austrian.

Loudon went on, calmly: "I assure your excellency that enthusiasm at our glorious victory has made me eloquent. I pictured to my empress the picturesque moment in which the conquering Prus-

sians were rushing forward to take possession of the batteries deserted by the flying Russians, at which time the Austrian horsemen sprang, as it were, from the ground, checked the conquerors, and forced them back; and by deeds of lionlike courage changed the fate of the day."

While Loudon, seeming entirely cool and careless, thus spoke, the face of the Russian general was lurid with rage. Panting for breath, he pressed his doubled fist upon the table.

Every one looked at him in breathless excitement and horror—all knew his passionate and unrestrained rage. But the Marquis Montalembert hastened to prevent this outburst of passion, and before Soltikow found breath to speak, he turned with a gay and conciliating expression to Loudon.

"If you have painted the battle of to-day so much in detail," said he, "you have certainly not forgotten to depict the gallant conduct of the Russian troops to describe that truly exalted movement, when the Russians threw themselves to the earth, as if dead, before advancing columns of the Prussian army, and allowed them to pass over them; then, springing up, shot them in the back." *

"Certainly I did not forget that," said Loudon, whose noble, generous heart already repented his momentary passion and jealousy; "certainly, I am not so cowardly and so unconscionable as to deny the weighty share which the Russian army merit in the honor of this day; but you can well understand that I will not allow the gallant deeds of the Austrians to be swept away. We have fought together and conquered together, and now let us rejoice together over the glorious result."

Loudon gave his hand to Soltikow with so friendly an expression that he could not withstand it. "You are right, Loudon; we will rejoice together over this great victory," cried he. "Wine, here! We will first drink a glass in honor of the triumph of the day; then we will empty a glass of your beautiful Rhine wine to the friendship of the Austrians and Russians. Wine here! The night is long enough for council; let us first celebrate our victory."

The Cossacks, at a sign from the adjutants, sprang from the floor and drew from a corner of the room a number of bottles and silver cups, which they hastened to place upon the table. The secretaries moved the papers, maps, etc.; and the table, which a moment before had quite a business-like aspect, was now changed into an enticing *buffet*.

Soltikow looked on enraptured, but the marquis cast an anxious and significant look upon the Austrian general, which was answered with a slight shrug of the shoulders. Both knew that the brave

* Archenholtz, Seven Years' War, p. 257.

General Soltikow, next to the thunder of cannon and the mad whirl of battle, loved nothing so well as the springing of corks and the odor of wine. Both knew that the general was as valiant and unconquerable a soldier as he was a valiant and unconquerable drinker —who was most apt while drinking to forget every thing else but the gladness of the moment. The marquis tried to make another weak attempt to remind him of more earnest duties.

"Look you, your excellency, your secretaries appear very melancholy. Will you not first hold a council of war? and we can then give ourselves undisturbed to joy and enjoyment."

"Why is a council of war necessary?" said Soltikow, sinking down into a chair and handing his cup to the Cossack behind him to be filled for the second time. "Away with business and scribbling! The dispatches to my empress are completed; seal them, Pietrowitch, and send the courier off immediately; every thing else can wait till morning. Come, generals, let us strike our glasses to the healths of our exalted sovereigns."

Loudon took the cup and drank a brave pledge, then when he had emptied the glass he said: "We should not be satisfied with sending our exalted sovereigns the news of the day's victory—it lies in our hands to inform them of the complete and irrevocable defeat of the enemy."

"How so?" said Soltikow, filling up his cup for the third time.

"If now, in place of enjoying this comfortable rest, and giving our enemy time to recover himself, we should follow up the Prussians and cut off the king's retreat, preventing him from taking possession of his old camp at Reutven, we would then be in a condition to crush him completely and put an end to this war."

"Ah, you mean that we should break up the camp at once," said Soltikow; "that we should not grant to our poor, exhausted soldiers a single hour of sleep, but lead them out again to battle and to death? No, no, sir general; the blood of my brave Russians is worth as much as the blood of other men, and I will not make of them a wall behind which the noble Dutchmen place themselves in comfortable security, while we offer up for them our blood and our life. I think we Russians have done enough; we do not need another victory to prove that we are brave. When I fight another such battle as I have fought to-day, with my staff in my hand and *alone* I must carry the news to Petersburg, for I shall have no soldiers left.* I have nothing to say against you, General Loudon. You have been a faithful ally; we have fought, bled, and conquered together, although not protected by a consecrated hat and sword like

* "Frederick the Great."—Geschow, p. 200.

Field-Marshal Daun, who ever demands new victories from us while he himself is undecided and completely inactive."

"Your excellency seems to be somewhat embittered against Daun," said Loudon, with a smile he could not wholly suppress.

"Yes," said Soltikow, "I am embittered against this modern Fabius Cunctator, who finds it so easy to become renowned—who remains in Vienna and reaps the harvest which belongs rightly to you, General Loudon. You act, while he hesitates—you are full of energy and ever ready for the strife; Daun is dilatory, and while he is resolving whether to strike or not, the opportunity is lost."

"The empress, my exalted sovereign, has honored him with her especial confidence," said Loudon; "he must therefore merit it."

"Yes; and in Vienna they have honored you and myself with their especial distrust," said Soltikow, stormily, and swallowing a full cup of wine. "You, I know, receive rare and scanty praise; eulogies must be reserved for Daun. We are regarded with inimical and jealous eyes, and our zeal and our good-will are forever suspected."

"This is true," said Loudon, smiling; "it is difficult for us to believe in the sincere friendship of the Russians, perhaps, because we so earnestly desire it."

"Words, words!" said Soltikow, angrily. "The German has ever a secret aversion to the Russian—you look upon us as disguised tigers, ever ready to rob and devour your glorious culture and accomplishments. For this reason you gladly place a glass shade over yourselves when we are in your neighborhood, and show us your glory through a transparent wall that we may admire and envy. When you are living in peace and harmony, you avoid us sedulously; then the German finds himself entirely too educated, too refined, for the barbaric Russian. But when you quarrel and strive with each other, and cannot lay the storm, then you suddenly remember that the Russian is your neighbor and friend, that he wields a good sword, and knows how to hew away with it right and left. You call lustily on him for help, and offer him your friendship—that means, just so long as hostilities endure and you have use for us. Even when you call us your friends you distrust us and suspect our good-will. Constant charges are brought against us in Vienna. Spresain languishes in chains—Austria charges him with treachery and want of zeal in the good cause; Fermor and Butterlin are also accused of great crimes—they have sought to make both their sincerity and ability suspected by the empress, and to bring them into reproach. This they have not deserved. I know, also, that they have charged me with disinclination to assist the allies—they declare that I have no ardor for the common cause. This makes bad

blood, messieurs; and if it were not for the excellent wine in your beautiful Germany, I doubt if our friendship would stand upon a sure footing. Therefore, sir general, take your cup and let us drink together—drink this glorious wine to the health of our friendship. Make your glasses ring, messieurs, and that the general may see that we mean honorably with our toast, empty them at a draught."

They all accepted the challenge and emptied a cup of the old, fiery Rhine wine, which Soltikow so dearly loved; their eyes flashed, their cheeks were glowing.

Loudon saw this with horror, and he cast an anxious glance at Montalembert, who returned it with a significant shrug of the shoulder.

"And now, your excellency," said Loudon, "that we have enjoyed the German wine, let us think a little of Germany and the enemy who can no longer disturb her peace, if we act promptly. Our troops have had some hours' rest, and will now be in a condition to advance."

"Always the same old song," said Soltikow, laughing; "but I shall not be waked up from my comfortable quarters; I have done enough! my troops also."

"I have just received a courier from Daun," said Loudon, softly; "he makes it my duty to entreat your excellency to follow up our victory and crush the enemy completely."

"That will be easy work," said Montalembert, in a flattering tone. "The army of the King of Prussia is scattered and flying in every direction; they must be prevented from reassembling; the scattering troops must be harassed and more widely separated, and every possibility of retreat cut off for Frederick."

"Well, well, if that *must be*," said Soltikow, apathetically, placing the cup just filled with wine to his lips, "let Field-Marshal Daun undertake the duty. I have won two battles; I will wait and rest; I make no other movements till I hear of two victories won by Daun. It is not reasonable or just for the troops of my empress to act alone." *

"But," said the Marquis Montalembert, giving himself the appearance of wishing not to be heard by Loudon, "if your excellency now remains inactive and does not press forward vigorously, the Austrians alone will reap the fruits of your victory."

"I am not at all disposed to be jealous," said Soltikow, laughing; "from my heart I wish the Austrians more success than I have had. For my part, I have done enough. † Fill your glasses, messieurs, fill your glasses! We have won a few hours of happiness from the

* Soltikow's own words.—See Archenholtz, p. 266.
† Historical.

goddess Bellona; let us enjoy them and forget all our cares. Let us drink once more, gentlemen. Long live our charming mistress, the Empress Elizabeth!" The Russian officers clanged their glasses and chimed in zealously, and the fragrant Rhine wine bubbled like foaming gold in the silver cups. Soltikow swallowed it with ever-increasing delight, and he became more and more animated.

The officers sat round the table with glowing cheeks and listened to their worshipped general who, in innocent gayety, related some scenes from his youth, and made his hearers laugh so loud, so rapturously, that the walls trembled, and Fritz Kober, who was crouching down in the bushes, could with difficulty prevent himself from joining in heartily.

The gayety of the Russians became more impetuous and unbridled. They dreamed of their home; here and there they began to sing Russian love-songs. The Cossacks, on the floor, grinned with delight and hummed lightly the refrain.

The wine began to exercise its freedom and equality principles upon the heart, and all difference of rank was forgotten. Every countenance beamed with delight; every man laughed and jested, sang and drank. No one thought of the King of Prussia and his scattered army; they remembered the victory they had achieved, but the fragrant wine banished the remembrance of the conquered.*

Montalembert and Loudon took no part in the general mirth. They had left the table, and from an open window watched the wild and frenzied group.

"It is in vain," whispered Loudon, "we cannot influence him. The German wine lies nearer his heart than his German allies."

"But you, general, you should do what Soltikow omits or neglects You should draw your own advantage from this tardiness of the Russian general, and pursue and crush the King of Prussia."

"I would not be here now," said Loudon, painfully, "if I could do that. My hands are bound. I dare not undertake any thing to which the allies do not agree; we can only act in concert."

A loud roar of laughter from the table silenced the two gentlemen. Soltikow had just related a merry anecdote, which made the Cossacks laugh aloud. One of the Russian generals rewarded them by throwing them two tallow-candles. This dainty little delicacy was received by them with joyful shouts.

"Let us withdraw," whispered Montalembert, "the scene becomes too Russian."

"Yes, let us go," sighed Loudon; "if we must remain here inactive, we can at least employ the time in sleep"

No one remarked the withdrawal of the two gentlemen. The

*See Prussia; Frederick the Great.—Gebhard, p. 73.

gay laughter, the drinking and singing went on undisturbed, and soon became a scene of wild and druken confusion.

"We can now also withdraw," whispered Charles Henry to Fritz Kober. "Come, come! you know we are expected."

With every possible caution, they hastened away, and only after they had left the camp of the Russians and Austrians far behind them, and passed again over the battle-field did Fritz Kober break silence. "Well," said he, sighing, "what have we to say to the king?"

"All that we have heard," said Charles Henry.

"Yes, but we have heard nothing," murmured Fritz. "I opened my ears as wide as possible, but it was all in vain. Is it not base and vile to come to Germany and speak this gibberish, not a word of which can be understood? In Germany men should be obliged to speak German, and not Russian."

"They did not speak Russian, but French," said Charles Henry; "I understood it all."

Fritz Kober stopped suddenly, and stared at his friend. "You say you understood French?"

"Yes, I was at home on the French borders. My mother was from Alsace, and there I learned French."

"You understand every thing," murmured Fritz, "but for myself, I am a poor stupid blockhead, and the king will laugh at me, for I have nothing to tell. I shall not get my commission."

"Then neither will I, Fritz; and, besides, as to what we have seen, you have as much to tell as I. You heard with your eyes and I with my ears, and the great point arrived at you know as much about as I do. The Russians and Austrians are sleeping quietly, not thinking of pursuing us. That's the principal point."

"Yes, that's true; that I can also assure the king—that will please him best. Look! Charles Henry, the day is breaking! Let us hasten on to the king. When he knows that the Austrians and Russians sleep, he will think it high time for the Prussians to be awake."

CHAPTER XV.

A HERO IN MISFORTUNE.

THE two grenadiers returned unharmed to the village where the king had at present established his headquarters. The first rays of the morning sun were falling upon the wretched hut which was occupied by his majesty. The peaceful morning quiet was unbroken by the faintest sound, and, as if Nature had a certain reverence for the hero's slumber, even the birds were hushed, and the morning

breeze blew softly against the little window, as if it would murmur a sleeping song to the king. There were no sentinels before the door; the bright morning sun alone was guarding the holy place where the unfortunate hero reposed.

Lightly, and with bated breath, the two grenadiers crept into the open hut. The utter silence disturbed them. It seemed incredible that they should find the king in this miserable place, alone and unguarded. They thought of the hordes of Cossacks which infested that region, and that a dozen of them would suffice to surround this little hut, and make prisoners of the king and his adjutants.

"I have not the courage to open the door," whispered Fritz Kober. "I fear that the king is no longer here. The Cossacks have captured him."

"God has not permitted that," said Charles Henry, solemnly; "I believe that He has guarded the king in our absence. Come, we will go to his majesty."

They opened the door and entered, and then both stood motionless, awed and arrested by what they beheld.

There, on the straw that was scantily scattered on the dirty floor, lay the king, his hat drawn partially over his face, his unsheathed sword in his hand, sleeping as quietly as if he were at his bright and beautiful Sans-Souci.

"Look!" whispered Charles Henry; "thus sleeps a king, over whom God watches! But now we must awaken him."

He advanced to the king, and kneeling beside him, whispered: "Your majesty, we have returned; we bring intelligence of the Russians and Austrians."

The king arose slowly, and pushed his hat back from his brow.

"Good or bad news?" he asked.

"Good news!" said Fritz. "The Austrians and Russians have both gone to bed; they were sleepy."

"And they have no idea of pursuing your majesty," continued Charles Henry. "Loudon wished it, but Soltikow refused; he will do nothing until Daun acts."

"So you sat with them in the council of war?" asked the king, smiling.

"Yes, we were present," said Fritz Kober, with evident delight; "I saw the council, and Charles Henry heard them."

The king stood up. "You speak too loud!" he said; "you will waken these two gentlemen, who are sleeping so well. We will go outside, and you can continue your report."

He crossed the room noiselessly, and left the hut. Then seating himself before the door, on a small bench, he told the two grenadiers to give him an exact account of what they had seen and heard.

Long after they had finished speaking, the king sat silent, and

apparently lost in thought. His eyes raised to heaven, he seemed to be in holy communion with the Almighty. As his eyes slowly sank, his glance fell upon the two grenadiers who stood before him, silently respectful.

"I am pleased with you, children, and this time the promise shall be kept. You shall become subordinate officers."

"In the same company?" asked Fritz Kober.

"In the same company. That is," continued the king, "if I am ever able to form companies and regiments again."

"We are not so badly off as your majesty thinks," said Fritz Kober. "Our troops have already recovered from their first terror, and as we returned we saw numbers of them entering the village. In a few hours the army can be reorganized."

"God grant that you may be right, my son!" said the king, kindly. "Go, now, into the village, and repeat the news you brought me to the soldiers. It will encourage them to hear that the enemy sleep, and do not think of pursuing us. I will prepare your commissions for you to-day. Farewell, my children!"

He bent his head slightly, and then turned to reënter the hut and awaken his two adjutants. With a calm voice he commanded them to go into the village, and order the generals and higher officers to assemble the remnants of their regiments before the hut.

"A general march must be sounded," said the king. "The morning air will bear the sound into the distance, and when my soldiers hear it, perhaps they will return to their colors."

When the adjutants left him, the king commenced pacing slowly up and down, his hands crossed behind him.

"All is lost, all!" he murmured; "but I must wait and watch. If the stupidity or rashness of the enemy should break a mesh in the net within which I am enclosed, it is my duty to slip through with my army. Ah! how heavily this crown presses upon my head; it leaves me no moment of repose. How hard is life, and how terribly are the bright illusions of our earlier years destroyed!"

At the sound of the drum, the king shivered, and murmured to himself: "I feel now, what I never thought to feel. I am afraid my heart trembles at the thought of this encounter, as it never did in battle. The drums and trumpets call my soldiers, but they will not come. They are stretched upon the field of battle, or fleeing before the enemy. They will not come, and the sun will witness my shame and wretchedness."

The king, completely overcome, sank upon the bench, and buried his face in his hands. He sat thus for a long time. The sounds before the door became louder and louder, but the king heard them not; he still held his hands before his face. He could not see the bright array of uniforms that had assembled before the window.

nor that the soldiers were swarming in from all sides. He did not hear the beating of drums, the orders to the soldiers, or military signals. Neither did he hear the door, which was gently opened by his adjutants, who had returned to inform him that his orders had been obeyed, and that the generals and staff officers were awaiting him outside the hut.

"Sire," whispered at length one of the adjutants, "your commands have been fulfilled. The generals await your majesty's pleasure."

The king allowed his hands to glide slowly from his face. "And the troops?" he asked.

"They are beginning to form."

"They are also just placing the cannon," said the second adjutant.

The king turned angrily to him. "Sir," he cried, "you lie! I have no cannon."

"Your majesty has, God be praised, more than fifty cannon," said the adjutant, firmly.

A ray of light overspread the countenance of the king, and a slight flush arose to his pale cheek. Standing up, he bowed kindly to the adjutants, and passed out among the generals, who saluted him respectfully, and pressed back to make way for their king. The king walked silently through their ranks, and then turning his head, he said:

"Gentlemen, let us see what yesterday has left us. Assemble your troops."

The generals and staff officers hurried silently away, to place themselves at the head of their regiments, and lead them before the king.

The king stood upright, his unsheathed sword in his right hand, as in the most ceremonious parade. The marching of the troops began, but it was a sad spectacle for their king. How little was left of the great and glorious army which he had led yesterday to battle! More than twenty thousand men were either killed or wounded. Thousands were flying and scattered. A few regiments had been formed with great trouble; barely five thousand men were now assembled. The king looked on with a firm eye, but his lips were tightly compressed, and his breath came heavily. Suddenly he turned to Count Dolmer, the adjutant of the Grand Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had arrived a few days before with the intelligence of a victory gained at Minden. The king had invited him to remain. "I am about to overpower the Russians; remain until I can give you a like message." The king was reminded of this as he saw the count near him.

"Ah," he said, with a troubled smile, "you are waiting for the message I promised. I am distressed that I cannot make you the

bearer of better news. If, however, you arrive safely at the end of your journey, and do not find Daun already in Berlin, and Contades in Magdeburg, you can assure the Grand Duke Ferdinand from me that all is not lost. Farewell, sir."

Then, bowing slightly, he advanced with a firm step to the generals. His eyes glowed and flashed once more, and his whole being reassumed its usual bold and energetic expression.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a clear voice, "fortune did not favor us yesterday, but there is no reason to despair. A day will come when we shall repay the enemy with bloody interest. I at least expect such a day; I will live for its coming, and all my thoughts and plans shall be directed toward that object. I strive for no other glory than to deliver Prussia from the conspiracy into which the whole of Europe has entered against her. I will obtain peace for my native land, but it shall be a great and honorable peace. I will accept no other; I would rather be buried under the ruins of my cannon, than accept a peace that would bring no advantages to Prussia, no fame to us. Honor is the highest, the holiest possession of individuals, as it is of nations; and Prussia, who has placed her honor in our hands, must receive it from us pure and spotless. If you agree with me, gentlemen, join me in this cry, 'Long live Prussia! Long live Prussia's honor!'"

The generals and officers joined enthusiastically in this cry, and like a mighty torrent it spread from mouth to mouth, until it reached the regiments, where it was repeated again and again. The color-bearers unfurled their tattered banners, and the shout arose from thousands of throats, "Long live Prussia's honor!"

The king's countenance was bright, but a tear seemed to glitter in his eye. He raised his glance to heaven and murmured:

"I swear to live so long as there is hope, so long as I am free! I swear only to think of death when my liberty is threatened." Slowly his glance returned to earth, and then in a powerful voice, he cried: "Onward! onward! that has ever been Prussia's watch-word, and it shall remain so—Onward! We have a great object before us—we must use every effort to keep the Russians out of Berlin. The palladium of our happiness must not fall into the hands of our enemies. The Oder and the Spree must be ours—we must recover to-morrow what the enemy wrenched from us yesterday!"

"Onward! onward!" cried the army, and the words of the king bore courage and enthusiasm to all hearts.

Hope was awakened, and all were ready to follow the king; for however dark and threatening the horizon appeared, all had faith in the star of the king, and believed that it could never be extinguished.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE TERESIANI AND THE PRUSSIANI.

At the splendid hotel of the "White Lion," situated on the *Canale Grande*, a gondola had just arrived. The porter sounded the great house-bell, and the host hastened immediately to greet the stranger, who, having left the gondola, was briskly mounting the small white marble steps that led to the beautiful and sumptuous vestibule of the hotel.

The stranger returned the host's profound and respectful salutation with a stiff military bow, and asked in forced and rather foreign Italian if he could obtain rooms.

Signor Montardo gazed at him with a doubtful and uncertain expression, and instead of answering his question, said:

"Signor, it appears to me that you are a foreigner?"

"Yes," said the stranger, smiling, "my Italian has betrayed me. I am a foreigner, but hope that will not prevent your showing me comfortable and agreeable rooms."

"Certainly not, signor; our most elegant and sumptuous apartment is at your command," said the host, with a flattering smile. In the mean time, however, he did not move from the spot, but gazed with confused and anxious countenance first at the stranger, and then at his large trunk, which the men were just lifting from the gondola.

"Will you please show me the rooms?" cried the stranger, impatiently advancing into the hall.

The host sighed deeply, and threw a questioning glance at the head waiter, who returned it with a shrug of his shoulders.

"I will first show you into the dining-saloon," murmured the host, hastening after the stranger. "Will you please step in here, excellency?" and with humble submission he opened the large folding doors before which they stood, and conducted the stranger into the magnificent saloon which served as dining-saloon and ball-room. "Now, excellency," continued the host, after he closed the door, and had convinced himself by a rapid glance that they were alone,

"forgive my curiosity in asking you two questions before I have the honor of showing you your rooms. How long do you intend to remain here?"

"A few days, sir. Well, your second question?"

The host hesitated a moment; then looking down, he said:

"Your excellency is a German?"

"Yes, a German," said the stranger, impatiently.

"I thought so," sighed the host.

"Will you show me my rooms or not? Decide quickly, for I know there are other handsome hotels on the *Canale Grande* where I would be willingly received."

The host bowed with an aggrieved expression. "Signor, I will show you rooms. Will you have the kindness to follow me?"

Like one who had come to a desperate decision, he advanced and pushed open a door which led to a long passage, with rooms on each side; he passed them all hastily, and entered a small, dark, side-passage, which was little in keeping with the general elegance of the building; the walls were not covered with tapestry, as those of the large halls, but with dirty whitewash; the floor had no carpet, and the doors of the rooms were low and small.

The host opened one of them and led the stranger into a small, simply-furnished room, with a little dark closet containing a bed.

"Signor," he said, with a profound bow, "these are, unfortunately, the only two rooms I can offer you."

"They are small and mean," said the stranger, angrily.

"They are quiet and remote, and you will have the advantage of not being disturbed by the ball which the club of the *Prussiani* are to hold in my grand saloon to-night."

As he finished, he looked at the stranger hastily and searchingly, to see what impression his words had upon him. He was decidedly astonished and confused.

"The Prussian Club?" he said. "Are there so many Prussians here, and are they to celebrate a gay feast when it appears to me they have every reason to mourn for their king's misfortune?"

It was now the stranger who gazed searchingly at the host, and awaited his answer with impatience.

"You ask if there are many Prussians here?" said the host, pathetically. "Yes, there are a great many in *la bella Venezia, eccellenza, chi non e buon Prussiano, non e buon Veneziano.* You say further, that the Prussians have no reason to celebrate a festival, but should mourn for their king's misfortunes. No, your excellency, the Prussians will never have reason to despair, for a hero like the great Frederick can never succumb. His sun is clouded for a moment, but it will burst forth again brilliant and triumphant,

and blind all his enemies. The Prussians celebrate this feast to defy the *Teresiani*. They have their club at the hotel of the 'Golden Fleece,' and held a grand ball there yesterday in honor of their victory at Mayen. 'Tis true the king has lost two battles, the battles of Künersdorf and Mayen, but the Prussians do not despair; for if the king has lost two battles, he will win four to make up for them, and the Austrians, French, and Russians will flee before him, as they did at Zorndorf and Rossbach. The Prussians wish to celebrate this feast to convince the *Teresiani* that they are not disturbed by the king's apparent misfortune, and are now celebrating the victories that their great king is still to achieve."

The stranger's face beamed with delight. "The Prussians have great confidence in their king," he said, with forced composure; "but you have not yet told me why so many Prussians are stopping here?"

The host laughed. "Signor does not occupy himself with politics?"

"No," answered the stranger, with hesitation.

"Well, otherwise you would have known that there are many Prussians in the world, and that all the world takes an interest in this war in which a single hero battles against so many powerful enemies. Yes, yes, there are Prussians in all Europe, and the great Frederick is joyfully welcomed everywhere; but nowhere more joyfully than in our beautiful Italy; and nowhere in Italy is he more welcomed than in our beautiful Venice. The nobles and the gondoliers decide for or against, and Venice is divided into two great parties: the first for the King of Prussia, the latter for the Austrian empress, Maria Theresa. But I assure you the *Teresiani* are mean and despicable, bought enthusiasts, and cowardly fools."

"Consequently, you do not belong to them, signor," said the stranger, smiling; "you are a good *Prussiano*."

"I should think so," cried the host, proudly; "I am a good patriot, and our watchword is, '*Chi non e buon Prussiano, non e buon Veneziano.*'"

"If that is so," cried the stranger, gayly, as he kindly offered the host his hand "I congratulate myself for having stopped here, and these small, mean rooms will not prevent my remaining. I also am a Prussian, and say, like yourself, what care we for the battles of Künersdorf and Mayen? Frederick the Great will still triumph over his enemies."

"Ah signor, you are a Prussian!" cried the host, with a true Italian burst of joy. "You are heartily welcome at my hotel, and be convinced, sir, that I shall do every thing to deserve your approval. Come, sir, these rooms are too small, too mean for a fol-

lower of Frederick; I shall have the honor of showing you two beautiful rooms on the first floor, with a view of the *Canale Grande*, and you shall pay no more for them. Follow me, sir, and pardon me that you were not at once worthily served. I did not know you were a *Prussiano*, and it would have been most dangerous and impolitic to have received a stranger who might have been a *Teresiano;* it might have deprived me of all the Prussian custom. Have the goodness to follow me."

He stepped forward briskly, and conducted the stranger across the passage through the grand saloon into the hall. The head waiter was standing there engaged in an excited conversation with the gondoliers who, having placed the traveller's trunk in the hall, were cursing and crying aloud for their money. While the waiter was assuring them, that it was not decided whether the stranger would remain with them or not, and perhaps they would have to carry his trunk farther, the host nodded smilingly at the head waiter and said, proudly, "His excellency is not only a German, but a Prussian."

The clouded faces of the waiters and gondoliers cleared immediately, and they gazed at the traveller with a significant smile as he mounted the splendid steps with the host.

"He is a Prussian!" cried the waiters. "*Evviva il Re di Prussia!*" cried the gondoliers, as they raised the trunk and carried it nimbly up the steps.

The saloon into which the host conducted his guest was certainly different from the small, unclean rooms he had shown him before. All was elegance, and with a feeling of pride he led the stranger to the balcony which offered a splendid view of the imposing and glorious *Canale Grande*, with its proud churches and palaces.

"And now, signor," said the host, humbly, "command me. If I can serve you in any manner, I shall do so with pleasure. Any information you desire, I am ready to give. Perhaps your excellency has—?"

"No," said the stranger, quickly, "I have no political mission, and my letter to the prior is of a very innocent nature. I am a merchant, and by chance have become possessed of several costly relics, and hope that the prior of the cloister may purchase them."

"Ah, relics," said the host, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders; "do you know, sir, that no one now is enthusiastic about such things? Politics leave us no time for piety; the Pope has lost his influence, and even the Romans are good *Prussiani*, and care not for Frederick the Great being a heretic. The Pope blesses his enemies and celebrates their victories with brilliant masses and costly presents. The Romans are indifferent to all this, and pray

for their hero-king, the Great Frederick, and in spite of the Pope desire him to triumph."

"Ah," said the traveller, with apparent sadness, "then I shall certainly not succeed with my relics, but I hope I shall do better in the city with my fans; for them I desire your advice. Will you please tell me the names of a few large commercial houses where they might buy some of my beautiful fans? But they must be good *Prussiani*, as you will soon see." He stepped to his trunk, unlocked it, and took from it an *étui* containing a number of fans.

"Look here, sir. I saw these fans in Geneva, and thinking I might perhaps do a good business with them in Italy, I bought several dozen. Examine the charming and tasteful paintings." He opened one of the fans; it was of white satin, with quite an artistic painting of a large Prussian eagle about to devour a white lily.

The host clapped his hands with delight. "Delicious!" he cried, laughing. "The Prussian eagle devouring the French lily; this is charming prophecy, a wonderful satire. You bought these fans in Geneva; there are Prussians in Geneva also, then."

"Every lady in Geneva has such a fan, and there are no better Prussians in Berlin than in Geneva."

"I am delighted, truly delighted," cried the Italian, enthusiastically. "The time will come when all the people of Europe will be Prussians and only princes *Teresiani*."

"Nevertheless, the people will have to obey their princes," said the stranger, with a watchful glance; "and if they command it, will war against the great king."

"Not we, not the Italians," cried the host, violently; "our Doge would not dare to side with the *Teresiani*, for he knows very well that would occasion a revolution in Venice and, perhaps, endanger his own throne. No, no, signor; our exalted government is too wise not to adopt a neutral position, while secretly they are as good Prussians as we are."

"But the Lombardians and the Sardinians?" asked the stranger, expectantly.

"They also are Prussians; even if their king is a *Teresiano*, as they say, his people are Prussians like ourselves."

"And the Neapolitans?"

"Well, the Neapolitans," said the host, laughing, "the Neapolitans are, as you know, not renowned for their bravery; and if they do not love the great Frederick, they fear him. The Neapolitans are the children of Italy, knowing only that Naples is a beautiful city, and fearing a barbarian might come and devour it. In their terror they forget that no one is thinking of them, and that they are separated by Italy and the Alps from all warlike people. The king

of Naples thinks it possible that Frederick may one day ascend Vesuvius with his conquering army and take possession of Naples. Since the king's last victories, Ferdinand has increased the number of his troops and doubled the guard in his capital."

The host laughed so heartily at this account, that the stranger was irresistibly compelled to join him.

"The King of Naples is but a boy nine years old. His ministers are older than himself, and should know a little more geography, signor. But *corpo di Bacco,* here I am talking and talking of politics forgetting entirely that your excellency is doubtless hungry, and desires a strengthening meal."

"'Tis true, I am a little hungry," said the stranger, smiling.

"In a quarter of an hour the most splendid dinner, that the celebrated White Lion can prepare, shall be ready for you signor," cried the host, as he rushed hastily from the room.

The stranger gazed thoughtfully after him. "It appears to me that I have been very fortunate in coming here; the good host seems to be a good Prussian, and I have learned more from him in a quarter of an hour than I would have done in a long journey through Italy. I shall now be able to act with zeal and energy. But I must not forget the *rôle* I have to play. I am a merchant trading with fans, curiosities, and relics, and very anxious to bring my wares to market."

The entrance of the waiter interrupted him, and soon the savory dishes invited the traveller to refresh himself.

CHAPTER II.

FREDERICK THE GREAT AS A SAINT.

"And now to business," said the traveller, when he had finished dining. "It is high time I were on my way, if I am to leave this place to-day." He hastened to his trunk and took from it several bundles and packages, some of which he put in his pockets and some, like a true merchant, he carried under his arm. Then putting on his large, black felt hat, he turned to leave the room. In passing the mirror he looked at himself, and broke out into a merry laugh at his appearance.

"Truly," said he, "I look like a veritable shop-keeper, and he who takes me for any thing else, must be of a more political turn of mind than my host, Signor Montardo, the *Prussiano.*"

He turned and left the room to obtain the address of some mer-

chants and a guide from his host. In spite of remonstrances Signor Montardo insisted on accompanying him.

"Otherwise," said he, "some one might address you who is not on our side, and if you were then to show him your fans, there would be a fearful scandal; the other party is quite as hot-headed as we are, and many a pitched battle has taken place between the *Teresiani* and the *Prussiani*. Come, sir; I must accompany you. We will not go by the canal, but through the small by-streets; they will lead us quickest to the Riva di Schiavoni, and then to the Rialto, which is our destination."

"Is that far from the convent of San Giovanni e Paolo?" asked the stranger.

"Ah, you are still determined to offer your relics to the abbot?" said the host, laughing

"Yes, and hope to sell them."

"Well, I wish you luck. The Rialto is not far from there. I will go with you until within the vicinity of the convent, but not farther."

"And why not?"

"Because the door-keeper is a raging *Teresiano*, and would undoubtedly close the door in your face, were I at your side."

"But did you not tell me the abbot was a *Prussiano?*"

"Yes, the abbot, but the porter is not; nor are many of the monks, I am sorry to say."

"Ah, even the monks are occupied with politics?"

"Signor," cried the host, pathetically, "every one here interests himself in politics; and when you hear that our little children are divided into *Teresiani* and *Prussiani*, you will credit me. There was a slight revolution yesterday in the Riva Peschiera. It was occasioned by a fishwoman's refusing to sell my cook some beautiful trout; she declared God had not created fish for the *Prussiani*, which, in her opinion, was another name for heathen and unbeliever. My cook insisted on having the fish, and, as unfortunately there were many *Prussiani* among the fishwomen, it soon came to hard words and still harder blows, and was terminated by the arrest of the principal disturbers."

They were now entering the Riva di Schiavoni, and the talkative Signor Montardo was continuing his merry tales when he was interrupted by cries and shouts of laughter and derision, and they were almost surrounded by a large crowd of excited men.

"We are fortunately at the end of our walk," said Signor Montardo, "for there is the house of my worthy friend Cicernachi, dealer in fancy goods, and it is to him we are going. Let us press forward to see what this crowd means. I presume my friend

Cicernachi has prepared another surprise for the good people of Venice."

He made a way for himself and friend with his broad shoulders, and soon stood in front of the shop around which the crowd was collected. A cry of astonishment escaped the stranger, and he pointed to the entrance of the shop. "You see there," said he, "a speaking likeness of Frederick the Great."

There hung at the front of the store a large engraving in a rich golden frame. It was the portrait of Prussia's hero king—of Frederick the Great—and beneath burnt a bright lamp, its light shedding a rosy tint over Frederick's noble countenance.

"Ah! I understand it now," whispered the host. "Cicernachi has done this to enrage the *Teresiani*. To show his boundless reverence for the king, he has placed a burning lamp beneath his picture, an honor due only in our country to the saints. Let us hear what the people have to say of it."

Just then a *Teresiano* commenced a speech, accompanied by violent gesticulations, against this insult to the Church. "How can you suffer this heretic to be represented by you as a saint?" cried he, in a voice of rage. "Do you not know that the Pope has excommunicated the King of Prussia? Do you not know that he is an enemy to God, to the Church, and to our holy Catholic religion? Away, then, with this lamp! The fires of hell will devour him, but no holy lamp shall enlighten his darkened soul."

"He is right, he is right," cried some among the crowd. "Away with the lamp! Break Cicernachi's windows, for he is a *Prussiano*. He makes a saint of a heretic! Put out the lamp!"

"Do not venture to touch the lamp," cried others. "Back! back! or our fists shall close your eyes until neither the lamp nor the great Frederick is visible to you."

"Put out the lamp, in God's name!" cried the infuriated *Teresiani*. And the cry was repeated by many of his party, as they pressed forward. But the *Prussiani*, amongst whom were our host and the stranger, had already formed a wall of defence before the store, and were energetically beating back the approaching *Teresiani*. And then there occurred a tumult, such as can only occur among passionate Italians. Wild shouts, curses, and threats were heard—eyes sparkling with rage, doubled fists, and here and there a dagger or a knife was seen.

But the noise suddenly ceased, and a deep stillness prevailed. No sound was heard but the quiet even tread of the solemn silent forms that stood suddenly, as if they had risen from the earth in their midst. No one had seen them come—no word was spoken by them, and still many retreated timidly, fearfully from them; their

presence was enough to quiet these enraged masses, to silence their anger. Even Signor Montardo deserted his prominent position before the lamp, and was gazing anxiously at the dark forms passing slowly through the crowd.

"The sbirri!" whispered he to the stranger. "The servants of the Council of Ten! Whom will they take with them?"

But it seemed as if these much-feared men only desired to cause the people to remember them only, to threaten—not to punish. They wished to remind the people that the law was watching over them. Completely hid by their long mantles, they passed with bowed heads through the crowd. Thus without addressing or noticing any one, they passed into one of the small by-streets leading from the Rialto.

As the last one disappeared, life once more animated the crowd. All breathed more freely when relieved from their much-feared presence, and soon they commenced talking again of Cicernachi's new saint.

"You see," whispered Montardo to the stranger, "that our government is neutral. It will punish neither the *Prussiani* nor the *Teresiani;* only warns us not to carry our zeal too far, and reminds us that it is against the law to carry a dagger or a knife in the street. But now let us enter the shop, and I will introduce you to Cicernachi."

He took the stranger's arm, and entered the shop, where a tall, slim man met him. His long black hair hung in wild disorder on both sides of his expressive countenance, his eyes sparkled with fire, and on his full red lip there was a proud, triumphant smile.

"Well, Montardo," said he, "you come undoubtedly to congratulate me on this victory over these miserable *Teresiani.*"

"Certainly, sir," cried Montardo, laughingly, "it was a most original idea."

"Do you know why I have done it?" said Cicernachi; "yesterday the *Teresiani* placed before their restaurants the bull of Pope Clement XI., which has just been confirmed and renewed by Clement XIII. It was printed on white satin, and enclosed in a beautiful gilt frame, and underneath it burnt a sacred lamp."

"What are the contents of this bull?" said Montardo.

"I will tell you the beginning," said Cicernachi, "I do not recollect all. It sounded thus: 'You have long known that Frederick, margrave of Brandenburg, in contempt for the authority of the Church, took to himself the name and *insignia* of king, a profane and unheard-of act among Christians. He has thus unwisely enough become one of those of whom it is said in the Bible 'They reigned, but not through Me; they were princes, but I did not know

them.' Do you conceive now why I placed the king's picture before my store? why I burnt a lamp beneath it? I think this glorious portrait is more deserving of a sacred lamp than the Pope's nonsensical bull."

"You are right, signor," said the stranger, advancing to Cicernachi and shaking hands with him. "Permit me to thank you in the name of my great and noble king whom you have this day defended in so original a manner from the malicious charges of his enemies. I give you my word of honor that the king shall hear of it through me; I know it will rejoice him."

"Ah, signor," said Montardo, laughing, "you forget that you are an honest merchant who does not concern himself about politics."

"I can never forget I am a Prussian," said the traveller; "and how could I forget it?" continued he, laughing. "My whole business consists of Prussian wares."

"Truly you have some very beautiful articles," said Montardo. "You will be charmed with them, Cicernachi; it will be another opportunity to annoy the *Teresiani*. Look at this merchant's fans."

The stranger opened several fans. Cicernachi's eyes sparkled with delight at the sight of the painting. "How many have you, signor?" said he.

"Twelve."

"I take them all, and regret you have not more."

"But Cicernachi, where has all your wisdom gone to?" cried Montardo. "You have not even asked the price; or do you, perhaps, think the stranger gives them to you for nothing?"

"No, no; I forgot it," said Cicernachi, gazing with delight at the fans which the stranger was spreading out before him. "What is their price, signor?"

The stranger was silent for a moment, and then said, in a hesitating manner: "I paid ten francs for each fan in Geneva."

"I give twice that," said Cicernachi, quickly.

The stranger started up hastily, blushing with annoyance. "Sir," said he, "I take from no one a higher price than I gave."

"Ah, signor, signor," cried Montardo, "you have again forgotten that you are but a merchant. No merchant sells his goods for what he gave for them. Remember that."

"I will make a good business with these fans," said Cicernachi. "I give you twenty-four francs, and will ask fifty for them. The ladies of our nobility, many of whom are *Prussiani*, will be delighted to annoy their opponents in so elegant a manner. Are you content, sir?"

"I am satisfied," said the stranger, blushing with embarrassment.

"Is this all you have for sale?"

"No, I have something else," said the stranger, opening another package. "As you are *Prussiano*, these neat little coins and medals, with pretty caricatures of the enemies of the king on them, will no doubt please you."

"Ah, let us see them," cried both Italians. They examined with eagerness the medals upon which the enemies of Frederick were represented in various laughable situations and positions.

"I take them all!" cried Cicernachi, enraptured.

The stranger laughed. "I cannot sell you my whole business," said he; "I must retain something. I will give you one of each. You must accept them as a token of my esteem, and must not pay me for them."

"Signor!" cried Montardo, in an imploring tone, "remain at my hotel as long as you please, and when I bring you your bill lay some of these coins upon it, and I shall be richly paid."

The stranger promised; then having received, with visible annoyance, the money for the fans, left the store with Montardo to pay his visit to the Convent Giovanni e Paolo.

CHAPTER III.

THE CLOISTER BROTHERS OF SAN GIOVANNI E PAOLO.

THE Prior of San Giovanni e Paolo had just returned from the second mass celebrated in the beautiful church of his cloister, the burial-place of the great Titiano Vicelli. With his arms folded across his back, he walked slowly and thoughtfully backward and forward, then stood before a large table at which a monk was occupied in unfolding letters and maps.

"This, your worship," said the monk, opening a new paper, "is an exact plan of the region around Mayen; we have just received it, and the positions of the two armies are plainly marked down. If agreeable to your worship, I will read the bulletins aloud, and you can follow the movements of the troops upon the map."

The prior shook his head softly. "No, Brother Anselmo, do not read again the triumphant bulletins of the Austrians and Russians; they pain my ears and my heart. Let us rather look at the map to see if the present position of the army offers any ground of hope."

"I have marked it all out with pins," said Father Anselmo; "the black pins signify the army of the allies, the white pins the army of the King of Prussia."

The prior bowed over the map, and his eye followed thoughtfully the lines which Father Anselmo marked out. "Your pins are a sad

omen," he said, shaking his head. "The black ones surround like a churchyard wall the white ones, which stand like crosses upon the solitary graves in the midst of their black enclosures."

"But the white pins will break through the enclosure," said Father Anselmo, confidently. "The great king—" Father Anselmo stopped speaking; suddenly the door opened, and the father guardian asked if he might enter.

The prior blushed slightly, and stepped back from the table as the sharp eyes of the father guardian wandered around the room and fell at last with a sarcastic expression upon the table covered with maps and plans.

"Welcome, Brother Theodore," said the prior, with a slight nod of the head.

"I fear that I disturb your worship in your favorite occupation," said the father guardian, pointing to the maps. "Your worship is considering the unfortunate condition of the heretical king whom God, as it appears, will soon cast down in the dust, and crush at the feet of the triumphant Church."

"We must leave results, at all events, to God," said the prior, softly; "He has so often evidently lent his aid to the King of Prussia, that I think no one can count confidently upon Frederick's destruction now."

"The Holy Father at Rome has blessed the weapons of his adversaries, consequently they must triumph," cried Father Theodore, unctuously. "But pardon, your worship, I forgot my errand. A stranger wishes to see the prior of the cloister; he has rare and beautiful relics to sell, which he will only show to your worship."

"Our church is rich enough in relics," said the prior.

"Your worship does not attach any especial value to such things," said the father guardian with a derisive smile; "but I must allow myself to recall to you that the Holy Father in Rome has only lately addressed a circular to all the cloisters, recommending the purchase of rare relics to the awakening and advancing of the true faith."

"You, father guardian, must understand that matter best," said Brother Anselmo, sticking four new pins into his map. "I think you brought back this circular about six months since, when you returned to take the place of guardian."

The father was in the act of giving an angry answer, but the prior came forward, and pointing to the door, said, "Introduce the stranger with the relics."

A few moments later the traveller from the hotel of Signor Montardo entered the prior's room. He received a kindly welcome, and was asked to show his treasures.

The stranger hesitated, and looked significantly at the two monks.

"I begged to be allowed to show them to your worship alone," said he.

"These two fathers are consecrated priests, and may therefore dare to look upon the holy treasures," said the prior, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

"I solemnly swore to the man from whom I bought these relics that I would only show them to the most worthy member of your order; he was a very pious man, and bitter necessity alone forced him to sell his precious treasures; he prayed to God to grant them a worthy place, and never to allow them to be desecrated by unholy eyes or hands. As the most holy and worthy brother is ever chosen to be the prior, I swore to show the relics only to the prior. Your worship will surely not ask me to break my oath?"

The prior made no answer; but nodded to the two monks, who silently left the room.

"And now, sir, show your treasures," said the prior, as the door closed behind them.

"Your worship," said the stranger, rapidly, "I have nothing but a letter from the Abbé Bastiani, which I was to give to your own hands." He drew a letter from his bosom, which he handed to the prior, who received it with anxious haste and hid it in his robe; then, with quick but noiseless steps he passed hastily through the room, and with a rapid movement dashed open the door; a low cry was heard, and a black figure tumbled back upon the floor.

"Ah! is that you, father guardian?" said the prior, in a tone of sympathy. "I fear that I hurt you."

"Not so, your worship; I only returned to say to you that it is the hour for dinner, and the pious brothers are already assembled in the hall."

"And I opened the door to call after you, father, and entreat you to take my place at the table. As I am in the act of looking at these holy relics, and touching them, I dare not soil my hands so soon afterward with earthly food. You will, therefore, kindly take my place, and I will not appear till the evening meal. Go, then, worthy brother, and may God bless you richly." He bowed and raising his right hand, made the sign of the cross, while the father guardian slowly, and with a frowning brow, passed through the room. Having reached the opposite door, he paused and looked back; but seeing the prior still standing upon the threshold of his room, and gazing after him, he dashed open the door and disappeared.

"Now, sir," said the prior, entering and closing the door carefully, "we are alone, and I am ready to listen to you."

"I pray your worship to read first the letter of your brother, the Abbé Bastiani."

"Ah! he has told you that I am his brother?" said the prior, eagerly. "He trusts you then, fully? Well, I will read the letter." He opened and read it impatiently. "This is a very laconic and enigmatical letter," said he. "My brother refers me wholly to you; he assures me I can confide entirely in your silence and discretion, and entreats me to assist you in the attainment of your object. Make known to me then, signor, in what way I can serve you, and what aim you have in view."

"First, I will give your worship a proof that I trust you fully and unconditionally. I will tell you who I am, and then make known my purpose; you will then be able to decide how far you can give me counsel and aid."

"Let us step into this window-niche," said the prior; "we will be more secure from eavesdroppers. Now, signor, I am ready to listen."

The stranger bowed. "First, I must pray your worship's forgiveness, for having dared to deceive you. I am no merchant, and have nothing to do with relics; I am a soldier! my name is Cocceji, and I have the honor to be an adjutant of the King of Prussia. My royal master has intrusted me with a most important and secret mission, and I am commissioned by your brother, the Abbé Bastiani, to ask in his name for your assistance in this great matter."

"In what does your mission consist?" said the prior, calmly.

The Baron Cocceji smiled. "It is difficult—yes, impossible to tell you in a few words. Your worship must allow me a wider scope, in order to explain myself fully."

"Speak on!" said the prior.

"I see, by the maps and the arrangements of the pins, that your worship knows exactly the position and circumstances of my royal master, whom all Europe admires and wonders at, and whom his enemies fear most when they have just defeated him. They know that my king is never so great, never so energetic and bold in action, as when he is seemingly at a disadvantage, and overwhelmed by misfortunes. The bold glance of the great Frederick discovers ever-new fountains of help; he creates in himself both power and strength, and when his enemies think they have caught the royal lion in their nets, his bold eye has already discovered the weak spot; he tears it apart, and makes his foes, bewildered with terror and astonishment, fly before him. It is true, the king has just lost three battles! The Austrians and Russians defeated him at Hochkirch, at Künersdorf, and at Mayen. But what have they gained? They have, in these three battles, lost more than the king: they have exhausted their resources—their own and those of their allies; but Frederick stands still opposed to them, full of strength and

power. His army is enlarged; from every side, from every province, shouting crowds stream onward to join the colors of their king. Enthusiasm makes a youth of the graybeard, and changes boys to men. Each one of them will have his part in the experience and fame of the great Frederick, and demands this of him as a holy right. The king's treasury is not exhausted; the people, with joy and gladness, have offered up upon the altar of the fatherland, their possessions, their jewels, and their precious things, and submit with enthusiasm to all the restrictions and self-denials which the war imposes upon them. They desire nothing but to see their king victorious; to help him to this, they will give property, blood—yes, life itself. It is this warm, enthusiastic love of his people which makes the king so fearful to his enemies; it protects him like a diamond shield, steels him against the balls of his adversaries, and fills his proud, heroic soul with assurances of triumph. All Europe shares this enthusiasm and these convictions of ultimate success with the Prussians and their dear-loved king. All Europe greets the hero with loud hosannas, who alone defies so many and such mighty foes, who has often overcome them, and from whom they have not yet wrung one single strip of the land they have watered with their blood, and in whose bosom their fallen hosts lie buried in giant graves. This has won for him the sympathy of all Europe, and the love and admiration of even the subjects of his great and powerful foes. In France—that France, whose warriors suffered so shameful a defeat at Rossbach, and whose government is filled with rage and thirsty for revenge against this heroic king—even in France is Frederick admired and worshipped. Even in the palace of the king, they no longer refuse to acknowledge his worth and glory. But lately, the young Duke de Belleisle exhorted the Marquise de Pompadour to implore King Louis to prosecute the war with earnestness and ardor, otherwise King Frederick might soon be expected in Paris with his army. The Marquise de Pompadour cried out warmly, 'Good! then I shall at last see a king!' In Germany, his enemies seek in vain to arouse the fanaticism of the people against the heretical king. Catholic Bavaria—the Palatinate—Main—enter murmuringly and reluctantly into this war against this Protestant king, although they wear the beads in their pockets, and the scapular over their shoulders. Even if Frederick the Second is now overcome by his enemies, in the public opinion he is the conqueror, and the whole world sympathizes with him. But public opinion is his only ally, and the sympathy of the people is his only source of revenue, outside of the subsidy from England, which will soon be exhausted. Frederick, therefore, must look after other allies, other friends, who will render him assistance, in so far as

not to unsheathe the sword against him, and to prepare some difficulties for his adversaries, and occupy a portion of their attention. Such friends the king hopes to find in Italy; and to attain this object, I would ask counsel and help of your worship."

"And in how far is it thought that I can be useful in this matter?" said the prior, thoughtfully.

"Your worship has a second brother, who is minister of the King of Sardinia, and it is well known he is the king's especial confidant and favorite."

"And my noble brother, Giovanni, merits fully the favor of his king!" said the prior, heartily. "He is the most faithful, the most exalted servant of his master!"

"In all his great and good characteristics, he resembles his brother, the Prior of San Giovanni, and I hope, in this also, that he is the friend of the King of Prussia!" said the stranger.

"But I fear neither the friendship of my brother Giovanni nor my own can be useful to the King of Prussia. I am a poor and powerless monk, suspected and watched. My offence is, that I have not, like the fanatical priests of the Church, wished for the destruction and death of the great Frederick. My brother is the minister of a king, whose land is neither rich enough in gold to pay subsidies, nor in men to place an army in the field."

"Well, then, we must take occasion to increase the territory of the King of Sardinia!" said Baron Cocceji. "We must give him so large a realm, that he will be a dangerous neighbor to France and Austria. This is the plan and the intention of my king. Upon these points turn the proposals I will make in Turin, for the furtherance of which, I pray your assistance. The King of Sardinia has well-grounded claim to Milan, to Mantua, and to Bologna, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle: why not make himself King of Lombardy? Unhappy Italy is like unhappy Germany—torn to pieces. In place of obeying one master, they must submit to the yoke of many. The dwellers in Italy, instead of being Italians, call themselves Milanese, Venetians, Sardinians, Tuscans, Romans, Neapolitans, and I know not what. All this weakens the national pride, and takes from the people the joyful consciousness of their greatness. Italy must be one in herself, in order to be once more great and powerful. Let the King of Sardinia take possession of Upper Italy, and he will, with his rightful inheritance, and as King of Lombardy, be a powerful prince—feared by his enemies, and welcomed by his allies."

"And do you think that Naples would look quietly on and witness this rapid growth of Sardinia?" said the prior, laughing.

"We will give to Naples an opportunity at the same time to

enlarge her borders. The young King of Naples has energy; he has proved it. When his father, Don Carlos, was called by right of succession to the Spanish throne, he had himself declared King of Naples, not regarding the right of the Duke of Parma, to whom, according to the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the Neapolitan throne rightly belonged. King Ferdinand is already a usurper! Let him go on, even as successfully in the same path—he has taken Naples—let him take Tuscany and the States of the Church, and, as King of Lower Italy, he will be as powerful as the King of Sardinia. In order that both may obtain possession of these lands uninterrupted and uninjured, will the King of Prussia so completely occupy the attention of Austria and France in Germany and Flanders as to make it impossible for them to interfere with Naples and Sardinia?" *

"By Heaven! a great and bold idea; altogether in harmony with the energetic spirit of Frederick," cried the prior. "If the two Italian kings resemble the great Frederick, they will adopt this plan with enthusiasm."

He had risen, and stepped hastily backward and forward, now and then murmuring a few disconnected words; he then drew near the table and stood earnestly regarding the maps.

Cocceji did not dare to interrupt him by word or sound; he watched him, however, closely. At last, however, the inward struggle seemed to be over; he stood quietly before the baron, and, fixing his dark, earnest eyes with a thoughtful expression upon him, he said, softly: "You have confided to me a great and dangerous enterprise. If I did my duty as the unconditional subject of the Pope, and as a priest of the holy Church, of which Frederick is the bitter antagonist, I should arrest you here, as a dangerous negotiator and enemy, and above all, I should give speedy notice of this conspiracy, which not only threatens Clement as head of the Church, but as sovereign of the States of the Church. But—what would you have?—I was not born a priest, and my heart and my spirit have never been able to accommodate themselves fully to the discipline of my order. I have always remained, I fear," said he, with a graceful smile, "the true brother of the free-thinking Abbé Bastiani; and it appears to me, it lies in our blood to love and pay homage to the great and intellectual King of Prussia. I will, therefore, listen to and follow the voice of my blood and of my heart, and forget a little that I am a priest of the only church in which salvation can be found. As far as it lies in my power, I will promote your object. I will give you letters to Turin, not only to my brother Giovanni, but to Father Tomaseo, the king's confessor. He is my most faithful friend, and sympathizes fully with me. If you can

* Preuss, "History of Frederick the Great."

win him and my brother Giovanni, you have won the king, and he will lend a willing ear to your proposals. Your plans are bold, but my brother and Father Tomaseo are daring, undaunted men; the progress of Italy and the greatness of their king lies nearest their hearts. They are both influenced by my judgment, and when you hand them my letters, you will at least be a most welcome guest."

He gave the baron his hand, and listened with a kindly smile to the enthusiastic thanks of the over-happy soldier, whose first diplomatic mission seemed to promise so favorably.

"Be, however, always prudent and discreet, signor," said the prior, laughing. "Play your *rôle* as merchant; do not lay it aside for one moment while in Turin. Leave Venice as quickly as possible; no doubt the brother guardian, who was sent from Rome as a spy, who watches not only all my actions, but my words and thoughts, has remarked our long interview, and is already suspicious. As he has a *fine nose*, he may soon discover a part of your secret! Do not return to the cloister. During the day I will send you the promised letters by a faithful brother. As soon as you receive them, be off! My best wishes and my prayers accompany you. Without doubt, you are, like your great king, a heretic. I cannot, therefore commend you to Mary Mother, and the saints, but I will pray to God to watch over you."

The prior stopped suddenly and listened! Loud cries of wild alarm forced themselves upon his ear; the sounds appeared to come from directly under his feet, and waxed louder and fiercer every moment.

"It is in the dining-room," said the prior, "follow me, sir, I beg you, we may need your help—some one is murdering my monks!" They hastened from the room with flying feet; they passed through the long corridors and down the steps; the cries and roars and howls and curses became ever clearer.

"I was not mistaken," said the prior, "this comes from the refectory." He rushed to the door and threw it hastily open, then stood, as if chained to the threshold, and stared with horror at the mad spectacle before him.

There were no murderous strangers there playing wild havoc amongst his monks; but the worthy fathers themselves were making the fierce tumult which filled the prior with alarm. The saloon no longer resembled the ascetic, peaceful refectory of cloister brothers. It was changed into a battle-field, upon which the two hosts thirsting for blood stood opposed.

The table upon which the glasses, plates, and dishes seemed to have been thrown together in wild disorder, was shoved to one side, and in the open space the monks stood with flashing eyes, uttering

curses and imprecations; not one of them remarked that the prior and Cocceji stood at the door, astonished spectators of this unheard-of combat.

"Silence!" said the father guardian, making frantic gesticulations toward the monks who stood opposed to him and his adherents —"silence! no one shall dare within these sacred walls to speak of the Prussian heretical king in any other way than with imprecations. Whoever wishes success to his arms is an apostate, a traitor, and heretic. God has raised the sword of His wrath against him, and He will crush him utterly; He has blessed the weapons of his adversaries as Clement has also done. Long live Maria Theresa, her apostolic majesty!"

The monks by his side roared out, "Long live Maria Theresa, her apostolic majesty!"

"She will not be victorious over Frederick of Prussia," cried Father Anselmo, the leader of the opposite party. "The Pope has blessed the arms of Daun, but God himself has blessed the weapons of Frederick. Long live the King of Prussia! Long live the great Frederick!"

"Long live the great Frederick!" cried the monks by the side of Father Anselmo.

The party of the father guardian rushed upon them with doubled fists; the adversaries followed their example. "Long live Theresa!" cried the one. "Long live Frederick!" cried the other—and the blows and kicks fell thickly right and left, with the most lavish prodigality.

It was in vain that the prior advanced among them and commanded peace—no one regarded him. In their wild and indiscriminate rage they pressed him and shoved him from side to side, and in the heat of the battle several powerful blows fell upon his breast; so the poor prior took refuge again at the door near Cocceji, who was laughing merrily at the wild disorder.

The cries of "Long live Theresa!" "Long live Frederick!" were mingling lustily in the bloody strife.

The father guardian was enraged beyond bearing, and his flashing eye looked around for some sharp weapon with which to demolish Father Anselmo, who had just exclaimed, "Long live Frederick, the victor of Leuthen and Zorndorf!" He seized a large tin cup, which was near him upon the table, and with a fierce curse he dashed it in the face of Father Anselmo, and the blood burst from his nose. This was the signal for a new order of attack. Both parties rushed to the table to arm themselves; the cups whizzed through the air and wounded severely the heads against which they were well aimed. Here and there might be heard whimperings and pite-

ous complaints, mixed with curses and frantic battle-cries—"Long live Theresa!" "Long live Frederick!" Some of the warriors crept from the contest into the corners to wipe the blood from their wounds and return with renewed courage to the contest. A few cowards had crept under the table to escape the cups and kicks which were falling in every direction.

Father Anselmo remarked them, and with loud, derisive laughter he pointed them out.

"The *Teresiani* live under the table, no *Prussiano* has crept there. All the *Teresiani* would gladly hide as they have often done before."

The *Prussiani* accompanied these words of their leader with joyous shouts.

The father guardian trembled with rage; he seized a large dish from the table and dashed it at Anselmo, who dodged in time, and then with a powerful arm returned the compliment. It was a well-directed javelin. The tin dish struck the father guardian exactly in the back—he lost his balance, and fell to the earth. The *Prussiani* greeted this heroic deed of their chief with shouts of triumph.

"So shall all the *Teresiani* perish!"

The battle waxed hotter and fiercer, the air was thick with missiles.

"They will murder each other!" cried the prior, turning to the Baron Cocceji.

"Not so, your worship; there will only be a few blue swellings and bleeding noses—nothing more," said Cocceji, laughing.

"Ah, you laugh young man; you laugh at this sad spectacle!"

"Forgive me, your worship; but I swear to you, I have never seen warriors more eager in the fray, and I have never been more curious to witness the result of any battle."

"But you shall not witness it," said the prior, resolutely. "You shall no longer be a spectator of the unworthy and shameful conduct of my monks. I pray you to withdraw instantly; in a few hours I will send you the letters, and if you believe that I have rendered you the least service, I ask in return that you will tell no one what you have seen."

"I promise, your worship," said Cocceji, with forced gravity. "If the people without shall ask me what all this tumult means, I will say that the pious fathers in the cloister are singing their '*Horas.*'"*

Baron Cocceji bowed to the prior, and returned with gay and hopeful thoughts to the hotel of the "White Lion."

A few hours later, a monk appeared and desired to speak with the stranger about the holy relics.

* Baron Cocceji did not keep his word, as this whole scene is historic.

Cocceji recognized in him the worthy Father Anselmo, the victor over the father guardian.

"Will you do me a great pleasure, worthy father?" said he. "Tell me which party remained in possession of the field after your great battle."

An expression of triumphant joy flashed in Father Anselmo's eyes.

"The *Prussiani* were victorious, and I think the *Teresiani* will never dare to recommence the strife; four of their monks lie in their cells with broken noses, and it will be some weeks before the father guardian will be capable of performing his duties as spy; he is sore and stiff, and his mouth is poorer by a few teeth. May all the enemies of the great Frederick share his fate! May God bless the King of Prussia and be gracious to his friends!"

He greeted the baron with the sign of the cross, and withdrew.

The baron remembered the warning of the prior, and hastened quietly from Venice. Already the next morning he was on the highway to Turin.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN FROM THE ARMY.

It was a sunny, summer day—one of those days which incline the heart to prayer, and bring tears of happiness to the eyes. There are no such days in cities; if we would enjoy them we must go into the country—we must seek them in peaceful valleys, in fragrant forests, where the silence is unbroken, except by the fluttering leaves and the singing of birds. We must understand the eloquent silence of Nature in order to enjoy the holy Sabbath quiet of a summer day; and we must be able to hear the language which the flowers breathe forth, to understand the sighing of the wind, and the rustling of the trees.

Very few can do this, but few would care for it. God has not opened the eyes of the hearts of many of us to this extent; these things are hidden by a thick veil from the many; they cannot see

*This diplomatic mission failed, because of the faint heart of the King of Sardinia. He rejected the bold propositions of Frederick entirely, and said, in justification of himself, that since the alliance between the powers of France and Austria, he had his head between a pair of tongs, which were ever threatening to close and crush him.

Baron Cocceji was not more fortunate in Naples, and after many vain efforts he was forced to return home, having accomplished nothing.—Duten's "Memoirs of a Traveller."

the heavenly beauty of Nature—they do not understand the fairy tale which she is ever telling. This is gentle, idyllic, fairy lore, unsought by the learned. It whispers of roses, of dancing elves, of weeping clouds, of dreaming violets.

Happy are those who listen to these fables, who are not called by the necessities of life to hear the roar of cannon—to find all these sweet and holy songs overpowered by the noise of war, the horrors of bloodshed!

War, destructive war, still held a lighted torch over unhappy Germany; cities and villages were in ruins—even the peace of Nature was destroyed. The valleys, usually so quiet, now often resounded with the roar of cannon. The fields remained uncultivated, the meadows uncared for; there were no strong hands to work. The men and youths were gone, only the old graybeards and the women were in the villages, and the work advanced but slowly under their trembling hands. Unhappiness and want, care and sorrow were in the land.

Even in the once peaceful and happy village of Brünen on the Rhine, misery had made itself felt. Grief and anguish dwelt with the bereaved mothers, with the forsaken brides, and the weak old men; with the useless cripples, who had returned from the war, and who spent their time in relating the dangers through which they had passed, in telling of the sons, the brothers, the husbands, and the fathers of those who listened to their tales—those dear ones who were, perhaps, now stretched upon the battle-field.

But on this bright day no one in the village gave a thought to the beauties of Nature, for a new misfortune weighed heavily upon the hearts of the unhappy inhabitants. They were no longer the subjects of the hero-king, who was so worshipped by all; under whose colors their fathers and sons still fought. The French army, led by the Duke de Broglie and the Count de St. Germain, had taken possession of all that part of the country, and held it in the name of their king. It was declared a French province, and the inhabitants, helpless and forsaken, were compelled to acknowledge the French as their masters, and to meet the taxes which were imposed upon them.

It was a most bitter necessity, and no one felt it more deeply than the old shepherd Buschman, the father of Charles Henry. He sat, as we first saw him, on the slope of the field where his flock was grazing, guarded and kept in order by the faithful Phylax. His eye was not clear and bright as then, but troubled and sorrowful, and his countenance bore an expression of the deepest grief. He had no one to whom he could pour forth his sorrows—no one to comfort him—he was quite alone. Even his youngest son, Charles

Henry, the real Charles Henry, had been compelled to leave him. The recruiting officers of the king had come a short time before the French troops had taken possession of the province, and had conscripted the few strong men who were still left in the village of Brünen.

But this time the men of Brünen had not answered joyfully to the demand. Even old Buschman had wished to keep his son Charles Henry with him. Had he not sent six sons to the field of battle, and had they not all died as heroes? Charles Henry was his last treasure, his one remaining child; his grief-torn heart clung to him with the deepest devotion. To be parted from him seemed more bitter than death itself. When the recruiting officer came into the hut of Buschman and summoned Charles Henry to follow him as a soldier, the eyes of the old man filled with tears, and he laid his hands upon the arm of his son as if he feared to see him instantly torn from his sight.

"Captain" he said, with a trembling voice, "I have sent the king six sons already; they have all died in his service. Tell me truly, is the king in great need? If so, take me as well as my son—if not, leave me my son."

The officer smiled, and extended his hand to the old man. "Keep your son," he said. "If you have lost six sons in the war, it is right that you should keep the seventh."

Buschman uttered a cry of joy, and would have embraced his son, but Charles Henry pushed him gently back, and his father read in his countenance a determination and energy that he had rarely seen there.

"No, father," he said, "let me go—let me be a soldier as my brothers were. I should have gone four years ago, when I was prevented, and Anna Sophia— Ah, let me be a soldier, father," he said, interrupting himself. "All the young men of the village are going, and I am ashamed to remain at home."

The old man bent his head sadly. "Go then, my son," he said; "God's blessing rest upon you!"

Thus Charles Henry went; not from a feeling of enthusiasm for the life of a soldier—not from love to his king—but merely because he was ashamed to remain at home.

He had now been absent several months, and his father had not heard from him. But the news of the lately lost battle had reached the village, and it was said that the Prince Royal of Brunswick, in whose corps Charles Henry was, had been defeated. The old shepherd remembered this as he sat in the meadow this bright summer morning. His thoughts were with his distant son, and when he raised his eyes to heaven it was not to admire its dazzling blue, or

its immeasurable depth, but to pray to the Almighty to spare his son. The peaceful tranquillity of Nature alarmed the old man—she speaks alone to those who have an ear attuned to her voice—she says nothing to those who listen with a divided heart. Buschman could endure it no longer; he arose and started toward the village. He longed to see some human being—to encounter some look of love—to receive sympathy from some one who understood his grief, who suffered as he did, and who did not wear the eternal smile that Nature wore.

He went to the village, therefore, and left the care of his flock to Phylax. It comforted his heart as he passed through the principal street of Brünen and received kind greetings from every hut he passed. He felt consoled and almost happy when here and there the peasants hurried toward him as he passed their huts, and begged him to come in and join them at their simple mid-day meal, and were quite hurt when he refused because his own dinner was prepared for him at home. These men loved him—they pitied his loneliness—they told him of their own cares, their own fears—and as he endeavored to console and encourage them, he felt his strength increase—he was more hopeful, more able to bear whatever God might send.

"We must be united in love," said Buschman; "we will help each other to bear the sorrows that may come upon us. To-morrow is Sunday; in the morning we will go to the house of God, and after we have whispered to Him the prayers which He alone must hear, we will assemble together under the linden-tree in the square and talk of the old times and those who have left us. Do you not remember that it was under the linden-tree we heard of the first victory that our king gained in this fearful war? It was there that Anna Sophia Detzloff read the news to us, and we rejoiced over the battle of Losovitz. And I also rejoiced and thanked God, although the victory had cost me the lives of two of my sons. But they perished as heroes. I could glory in such a death; and Anna Sophia read their praises from the paper. Ah, if Anna lived, I would at least have a daughter."

He could speak no more, emotion arrested the words on his lips; he bowed to his friends and passed on to his lonely hut. His little table was spread, and the young girl who served him, and who slept in his hut at night, was just placing a dish of steaming potatoes before his plate. The old man sat down to his solitary meal; he ate only to sustain his body; his thoughts were far away; he took no pleasure in his food. In the middle of his meal he started up; a shadow had fallen across the window, and two loving, well-known eyes had seemed to look in on him. Buschman, as if paralyzed with

delight, let fall his spoon and looked toward the door. Yes, the bolt moved, the door opened, and there stood the tall figure of a Prussian soldier.

The old man uttered a cry and extended his arms. "Oh, my son, my beloved son, do I indeed see you once more?"

"Yes, father, I am here; and God willing, we will never again be parted." And Charles Henry hastened to the outstretched arms of his father, and kissing him tenderly, pressed him to his heart.

"The thought of you, dear father, has led me here," he said; "but for you I would not have returned to Brünen; I should have wandered forth into the world—the world which is so much greater and more beautiful than I ever dreamed. But your dear old eyes were before me; I heard your loved voice, which called to me, and I returned to you."

"God be praised!" said his father, folding his hands, and raising his eyes gratefully toward heaven. "Oh how kind and merciful is God, to give me back my last, my only son, the support of my old age, the delight of my eyes! You will not leave me again. This is not merely a leave of absence; you have obtained your release, the war is ended, the king has declared peace."

The eyes of the old man were dimmed with tears; he did not perceive how Charles Henry trembled, and that a deep flush mounted to his brow.

"No, father," he said, with downcast eyes, "I will never leave you again. We have all returned home. It will be bright and gay once more in the village, and the work will go forward, for there is a great difference between a dozen old men and as many young ones. It was most needful for us to return. The corn is ripe, and should have been already gathered. We must go to work. To-morrow shall be a happy day for the village; the whole neighborhood shall perceive that the twelve young men of Brünen have returned. We met a violinist on the way, and we engaged him for to-morrow. He must play for us under the linden-tree, and our fathers and mothers, and sisters and sweethearts must join us, and we will dance and sing and make merry."

"What a coincidence!" said the old shepherd, with a bright smile. "We had already decided that we would meet together to-morrow under the linden. We wished to sit there and mourn together over our lost sons. To sing and dance is much better, and perhaps the old grayheads will join you."

"You must dance with me, father," said Charles Henry, laughing. "I will take no refusal.

"I will, my son, I will; joy has made me young again, and if Phylax, the old graybeard, does not mind, and will allow me, I

will dance with you, but you know he is always jealous of you. I am sure the whole village will envy you your gay young partner. But now, my son," he continued gravely, "tell me of our king, and how is it that he has declared peace so suddenly, and whether he has been victorious or the reverse."

"I know nothing of the king" said Charles Henry; "I was not near him, but in the division of the Duke of Brunswick."

"I know that, my son; but the duke would not proclaim peace without the knowledge and consent of the king."

"Oh, father, they will compel the king to make peace," cried Charles Henry. "And as for the Duke of Brunswick, he has given up the attack against Wesel and has withdrawn to Westphalia, and the French are in possession of the entire lowlands, which, it is to be hoped, they will retain."

"You hope that?" asked his father, with astonishment.

"Well, yes, father. The French king is now, and perhaps will always be, the lord of Cleve; and, as his subjects, we must wish him success, and hope that he will always conquer the King of Prussia."

"What do you say, my son?" asked the old man, with a bewildered expression. "I fear you are right. The French are our masters now, and, as our king has declared peace with France, we have the unhappiness of being French subjects. May God protect us from such a fate! It would be fearful if we dared not call the great hero-king our king, and, if we should live to see the day when our sons should be compelled, as French soldiers, to go to battle against their king. Only think, Charles Henry, you would not be allowed to wear your fine Prussian uniform on Sundays, and it is so becoming to you, and is as good as new. But how is it, my son, that they have left you the uniform? They are usually taken from the released soldiers and put amongst the army stores."

"We all came home in our Prussian uniforms," said Charles Henry, "but of course we will lay them aside to-day."

"Why to-day?"

"Because we are French subjects, and therefore it is not proper for us to wear the uniform of the enemy, the King of Prussia. That is also the reason why we have returned home. When we learned that Cleve had fallen into the possession of the French, we knew that we were no longer the subjects of the King of Prussia, and we dared not fight under his flag against the French, whose subjects we had become. We considered that, and we thought how much it would injure you all here in Brünen if it were known that your sons were in the army of the Prussian king. Principally on that account we determined to return home, and we left our regiment yesterday morning, which was on the point of marching off

to Minden, and we walked the entire day and half the night. We slept a few hours in a forest, and at the break of day we recommenced our journey. And now, father, that I have seen you, and you know every thing, I will go to my room and take off this uniform, and become a peasant once more." He sought to leave the room hastily, for the amazed, horror-struck expression of his father was most disagreeable to him.

But Buschman placed his hand so heavily upon his son's arm that he was compelled to remain. "Say it is a jest, Charles," he cried, in an excited voice. "It is not possible for my son, the brother of my six hero-boys, to speak thus! It is merely a jest, Charles. You wished to joke with your old father. It is not true that you have deserted the flag of our king; put an end to this cruel jest, Charles Henry, and show me your leave of absence which every honest soldier obtains before leaving his regiment. Do you hear, Charles Henry? Show it to me quickly." He extended his trembling hand toward his son, while with the other he still held his arm in a powerful grasp.

"Father," said Charles Henry, fiercely, "I have no such paper. It is as I told you; we have left the Prussian army because we are no longer the subjects of the King of Prussia, and it is not necessary for us to remain in the service. We wish to become peasants once more."

"You lie! you lie!" cried his father. "You are no deserter—it is impossible that my son should be a deserter."

"No, father, I am no deserter," returned his son, defiantly, as he freed his arm from the old man's grasp. "I am no deserter—I have only done my duty as a subject of the French king. I have left the flag of the enemy, and I am here ready and willing to obey my new master as a true subject. That is all I have to say, father, and I believe when you consider, you will see that I was right, and that you will be pleased for me to take off the Prussian uniform and remain with you." He did not wait for his father's answer, but left the room hastily, as if he feared to be again detained.

The old man arose to follow him, but his feet refused their accustomed office; with a deep groan, he sank upon his chair, and as the scalding tears streamed from his eyes, he murmured: "Oh, my God! my son is a deserter! Why did you permit me to live to see this shame? Why did you not close my eyes that they might not meet this disgrace?"

CHAPTER V.

THE BRAVE FATHERS AND THE COWARDLY SONS.

THE clear bell of the village church was sounding for mass, calling the pious inhabitants of Brünen to worship in the temple of God. All the hut-doors were opening, and men and women in Sunday attire wending their way in solemn stillness to church. They were followed by their children—the maidens with downcast, modest eyes, the boys with bright and joyous faces, proud of the thought that they were old enough to go to church.

From the distant farm came the servants, two and two, up the broad chestnut alley, greeting here and there the church-goers, and walking on with them, chatting softly. They all remained standing a short time under the great linden, waiting until the bell ceased, until the church-door was opened and the minister appeared with the sacristan and the four choir-boys. Not until then were they allowed to enter the church.

A bright-looking crowd was assembled under the linden; it seemed as if all the inhabitants of the village were there. All felt the necessity of visiting God's house to-day to thank Him for the safe return of their sons, brothers, and lovers. The twelve boys who had returned were under the linden in their handsomest Sunday attire. But why did they stand alone? Why was such a wide space left between them and the other villagers? Why did the men avoid looking at them? Why did the maidens step timidly back and remain silent when they approached and tried to speak with them? Why were they all whispering together, pointing at the boys and turning their backs upon them when they drew near?

"Leave them alone," whispered one of the boys to the others; "they will be more friendly this afternoon when the music is playing and the wine and cake is handed."

"There is my father, and I must go and meet him," said Charles Henry, as he hastened toward the old man who was approaching the square.

All drew back from Charles Henry, and as he stood opposite his father, like actors upon the stage they found themselves alone amongst the spectators, who were gazing at them with breathless expectation.

"Good-morning, father," said Charles Henry, with forced gayety, as he offered his hand to his father. "You slept so late to-day, and went to bed so early yesterday, that I have not been able to speak to you since our first greeting. So I bid you good-morrow now."

The old man looked quietly at him, but he did not take the proffered hand, and tried to pass him.

"Father," continued Charles Henry, "you must be tired; our hut lies at the other end of the village, and that is a long walk for your old legs. Rest yourself on me, father, and allow your son to lead you to church." He stretched forth his hand to take the old man's arm, but Buschman pushed it back, and passed him, without looking, without even speaking to him.

Charles Henry sprang after him. "Father," he cried, "do you not hear me? Can you—"

The old man did not really appear to hear him, for he walked toward the village justice with a quiet, unmoved face, as the latter advanced to meet him.

"Friend," said Buschman, in a loud, firm voice, "I am fatigued with my walk; will you lend me your arm?"

He leaned heavily upon the offered arm, and walked quickly onward. All heard these words, but only the justice saw the tears which rolled down his pale, sunken cheeks.

"You were very harsh, father," murmured the justice, as they walked on.

"Were you more forgiving?" said the old man, with a trembling voice. "Was not your son amongst the twelve, and did you speak to him, or look at him?"

"He did not pass the night in my house; I drove him away!" said the justice gloomily.

"Oh, oh!" sighed the old man; "how bitter is our grief! We love our children most when they give us most sorrow; but it must be so, friend, we cannot act otherwise. Let us enter the church, and pray God to give us strength to do what is right."

Supported by the justice, he entered the churchyard, while from the other side the minister, followed by the sacristan and the choir-boys, was just appearing.

"See," murmured the justice, "our good old minister has not come to-day to preach to us; but has sent his assistant. There is certainly some disagreeable order of the archbishop to read to us, and our pastor is not willing to read it; he is a good Prussian, and loves the great king."

The young minister advanced smilingly to meet the two old men

"Well," said he, with sanctimonious friendliness, as he offered both of them a hand, "allow me to congratulate you."

"For what?" asked both of them, astonished.

"For the happiness of yesterday. Can there be a greater joy for fathers than to receive their sons safe and sound from the tumult of battle? Your sons have returned home, faithfully fulfilling their

duty to their new master, his Catholic majesty of France. They abandoned the flag of the heretic king, laid aside his uniform, and are again simple peasants, ready to assist their fathers in the field. Come, my young friends, that I may give you the blessing of the Church, for so resolutely fulfilling your duty."

He held out his hand to the young men, who were just entering the churchyard. They obeyed his call the more readily, as it was the first welcome they had received—the first kind word they had heard since their return. As they approached the minister, the other men drew back, and entered the church hastily, followed by their wives and children.

"You will see, father," murmured the justice, as they seated themselves together in the pew, "that there is an order to-day. Whenever the assistant is so delighted and friendly, there is something wrong. They are certainly meditating some villanous trick against Frederick, and therefore our good pastor is not here."

The justice had prophesied aright. When the services were over, and the congregation about to leave the church, the assistant again mounted the pulpit, and desired them to remain for a while, and hear what he had to communicate, in the name of the archbishop, Sir Clement Augustus of Bavaria.

"His eminence, the most honorable archbishop, sends his dear and faithful children the holy blessing and salutation of the Church. These are his words: 'We, Clement Augustus, archbishop of Bavaria, entreat and command our children in Christ to be faithful to their new government and their new king, Louis XV. of France, whose apostolic majesty has taken the sword of the Lord into his blessed hand, to fight the enemies of the Church, and to chastise and punish the rebellious heretic prince who has arbitrarily named himself King of Prussia. God's anger is against him, and He will crush and destroy the presumptuous mockers of the Lord. Woe unto them who will not listen to God's voice, who in their mad blindness cling to this heretic! Woe unto you if, in the delusion of your hearts, you still offer him love and faith! You are released from all duty to him as subjects, and you now have the blessing of the Church. I, as your shepherd, made so by the holy Pope of Rome, command you, therefore, to be faithful to your new master —pray that God may bless his arms, and grant him victory over his ungodly enemy. My anger and dire punishment shall reach any one who refuses to obey this command. He who dares to stand by the heretic king, is himself a heretic, and a rebellious subject of the Church. Be on your guard; heavy punishment shall meet those who dare to rejoice over the fame of the so-called great Frederick. Such rejoicing will be regarded as blasphemy against the holy

Mother Church. To conclude, we remain your loving father, and send our dear children in Christ our most gracious love and greeting.'"

The men listened to the message of the fanatic archbishop with gloomy faces and downcast eyes; but the twelve boys, who at first stood alone in the aisle, not daring to seat themselves with the others, now gazed boldly and triumphantly around, seeming to ask if the villagers did not now acknowledge that they had acted wisely in returning.

With renewed courage, and somewhat proudly, they were the first to leave the church, and placed themselves in two rows at the door. While the congregation was passing by they invited their dear friends and relations to meet them that afternoon under the great linden, where they would hold a little festival to celebrate their safe return.

"We shall come," said the men, with earnest, solemn voices. "We will be there," said the mothers, gazing with tearful eyes at the triumphant faces of their sons. The young maidens whom the boys invited to dance, passed them in silence.

Old Buschman, alone, did not answer his son's invitation, nor did he follow the rest to the village, but turned to the side of the churchyard where his wife was buried. He seated himself upon her grave, and murmured a few words with trembling lips, raising his face toward heaven. A sob escaped him every now and then, and the tears rolled slowly from his eyes. From time to time he wrung his hands, as if bewailing his sorrow to God and beseeching His mercy, then brushed away his tears—angry with himself for being so moved.

He sat there a long, long time, struggling with his grief—alone with God and his shame. Approaching steps aroused him; he looked up. The village justice stood before him, and gazed at him with a melancholy smile.

"I knew I would find you here, Father Buschman, and I came for you. The time is come; we are all assembled on the square awaiting you."

"I come!" said the old man, as he stood up resolutely, giving a last loving farewell glance at his wife's grave.

The old man no longer needed his friend's arm to support him, his steps were firm; his form manly and erect, his venerable countenance glowed with energy.

By the side of the village justice he walked to the square, under the great linden. There every thing looked bright and gay. The boys had taken advantage of the dinner hour to make worthy preparations for their festival. They had brought fresh evergreens from the woods, and had made wreaths and festooned them from tree to

tree around the square. The ground was covered prettily with flowers and leaves, and the bench under the tree was decorated with a wreath of field-flowers.

On one side of the square stood several tables covered with bottles of wine and beer and cake and bread; not far from the tables was a throne adorned with flowers, where sat the fiddler, gazing proudly around him, like a king who knows he is the crowning point of the feast.

It certainly had been a long time since the merry sound of the fiddle had been heard in the village of Brünen. The throne was surrounded by little boys and girls listening with wondering delight at the gay music. But the grown girls stood afar off and did not look even once at the enticing fiddler, but hid themselves timidly behind the mothers, who were standing with stern faces gazing at the groups of men waiting anxiously on the other side of the square.

The stillness and universal silence began at last to make the boys uneasy. They had tried in vain to engage the men in conversation. They received no answer to their questions, and when they turned to the women and the maidens, they also remained dumb. The returned soldiers then went to the other side of the square to talk to the fiddler and the children; but when they began to fondle and play with the little ones, they were called by their fathers and mothers and bade to remain at their side.

The boys gazed questioningly at one another.

"I am curious to know what this means; are we to remain standing here all night?" muttered one of them.

"It appears to me that they are waiting for some one," murmured another.

"They are expecting my father," said Charles Henry; "and see, there he comes from the churchyard. The justice went for him."

When the old man arrived at the square the men advanced to meet him, conducted him gravely to the bench under the great linden, and assisted him to stand upon it. There he towered above them, and his pale, venerable face, his silver hairs were visible to all. Every eye was directed to him, and breathless silence ensued. The old man raised his arm and pointed toward the side where the twelve boys stood.

"Come to me, Charles Henry Buschman," he said, solemnly; and as his son advanced rapidly to him, he continued: "I ask you in the name of God, if what you told me yesterday is true? Have you secretly left the flag of your king, our sovereign—the great King Frederick of Prussia? Is it true that you have forsaken your regiment and the flag to which you swore to be faithful?"

"It is true," said Charles Henry, with assumed daring, "but we

were not only justified in doing so—our duty compelled us. We are no longer Prussian subjects, but subjects of the King of France. You all heard to-day what the minister read to us in church—how the archbishop commanded us to be faithful to our new sovereign. We could no longer wear the Prussian uniform or be Prussian soldiers, therefore we returned to our village."

"You returned as dishonored, faithless soldiers!" cried the old man, looking angrily at his son—"you returned covered with shame—miserable deserters—to the disgrace of your fathers, mothers, your brothers, sisters, sweethearts, and your friends. You have deserted the flag of your rightful king, to whom you swore the oath of allegiance—an oath which God received, and which no man can annul. Men of Brünen! shall we stand this shame that our sons bring upon us? Shall the world point their fingers at us and say: 'These are the fathers of soldiers who deserted their regiment, and were false to their king?'"

"No!" cried they all, as with one voice—"no, we will not stand this—we will have no deserters as sons!"

The old man bowed his head in silence; then turned slowly to the side where the women stood.

"Women and maidens of Brünen! Will you allow your sons and brothers who are covered with shame, to stay amongst you? Will you receive the deserters in your houses and at your tables? Will you open your arms to them and call them sons and brothers?"

"No, no!" cried the women and maidens, simultaneously; "we will not receive them in our houses, or at our tables. We will have no deserters for sons or brothers!"

The old man stood erect, and, as if inspired with a mighty enthusiasm, raised his arm toward heaven, and his countenance beamed with holy light.

"They must return to their flag," he cried, in a commanding voice. "With your blood you must wash the shame from your brows, and from ours. If God preserves your lives, and you redeem your honor as brave soldiers of the King of Prussia, then and then only we will receive you as our sons and welcome you to our arms."

"So shall it be!" cried the men and the women, and the maidens murmured their acquiescence.

The old man stepped from the bench and walked forward slowly to the other side of the square where the twelve young men were standing gazing at him with terrified faces.

"Return!" cried the old man, stretching his arm toward them—"return to the flag of your king; we want no deserters amongst us; away with you!"

"Away with you!" cried the men—"away from our village!"

The children, influenced by their parents, cried out with shrill voices: "Away from our village—away!"

The youths were at first stunned, and gazed with staring eyes at the crowd of angry faces and flashing eyes which menaced them, then seized with terror, they fled.

"Away with you! away with the deserters!" was thundered after them. "Away with you!" cried their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends.

This fearful cry sounded to them like the peal of the last judgment. With trembling knees, and faces pale as death, they rushed down the principal street of the village. The crowd started after them, and like the howling of a storm, shouted behind them: "Away with you!—away with the deserters!"

On they ran, as if pursued by furies, farther, farther down the street, but the villagers still chased them. Once only Charles Henry dared to look around at the pursuers. It was a fearful sight. At the head of the rest he saw his old father, with his pale face, his white hair flying in the wind; raising his arms threateningly toward him, he cried out in a thundering voice: "Away with you! —away with the deserters!"

Charles Henry rushed onward—a cry of terror escaped his lips, and he fled like a madman.

They had passed the borders of the village—it was quiet behind them—they dared to look back—they were alone. But on the boundary-line the villagers stood—their faces turned toward the fugitives—and like the distant croakings of a raven there sounded in the air: "Away with you!—away with the deserters!"

Breathless, with tottering knees, the boys sank down—with hollow eyes, speechless with terror, sorrow, and humility, they gazed at each other.

They did not dare return to the village. Perhaps to appease the anger of their relations, perhaps because they repented of their cowardice, they returned to their regiment, acknowledged their crime, and prayed for forgiveness.

Thus the brave fathers of the village of Brünen punished their cowardly sons, and drove the dishonored and faithless boys to their duty, perhaps to their death.*

*This account is historical.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRAITOR'S BETRAYAL.

COUNT RANUZI was alone in his apartments. He sat at his writing-table reading over the two letters he had just written; a triumphant smile was upon his lip as he finished. "It will succeed," murmured he, softly; "we will take Magdeburg without a blow, and thus deprive the King of Prussia of his most valuable fortress. The plan cannot miscarry; and then I have only to convince the empress that I was the soul of this undertaking—that I led the intrigue. Ah, I shall succeed at last—I shall occupy a position worthy of me—and as general of our order I shall rule the world. I shall earn this title at Magdeburg—there I will build my throne—there I will reign! But I must consider it all once more, to see if no error, no mistake, has escaped me. I first formed a connection with the officer Von Kimsky, an Austrian prisoner, because through him I could make connections between the town and the citadel. Kimsky, at my wish, made some of his town friends acquainted with the officers of the citadel. It was then necessary to give these new friends some clew, some aim that would appear innocent to them, and conceal the real plan. I chose Trenck as the protecting shield for my undertaking. To inspire him with confidence in my agents, I obtained a sort of credential letter from Princess Amelia, and interested her in my cause. She provided me with money, and gave me, besides the one to Trenck, a letter of recommendation to a sure, trustworthy friend in Magdeburg. I was now much nearer my design. On the pretence of working for Trenck, I worked for myself, for my position of general of the Jesuits, and for a fortress for my empress. And thus far all my plans have succeeded. Trenck has formed a connection with three Prussian officers of the citadel. These, touched with sympathy for his pitiful condition, have determined to do all in their power to release him, and are, therefore, in constant companionship with those whom Trenck calls his friends. These, in the mean time, are my agents and subordinates; they act for me while acting for Trenck; the Prussian officers do not anticipate that, in helping Trenck to his freedom, they are helping the Empress of Austria to a new fortress. But so it is. There is no error in my plan, it will succeed. I can rely on Trenck; he is a subject of Maria Theresa, and his thirst for revenge is mighty. He will gain a fortress for his empress. The avenger, through whom God has chosen to punish this arrogant, heretical king, will arise from the depths of a subterranean prison. All that

is now left to be done is to acquaint Vienna with the information of this undertaking, so that we may be assured that an Austrian regiment will be in the vicinity of Magdeburg at the proper time, and storm the citadel at a sign from us, and not have that, which we had taken by strategy, torn from us by the King of Prussia's superior force. Now is a favorable time for this. For Frederick, the humiliated, defeated king, is many miles from Magdeburg; he has been compelled to raise the siege of Dresden, and the Austrian troops are lying there like the Russians at Frankfort. Nor are the French far off. All these armies will be prepared to hasten to our aid. All that now remains to be done is to get this news safely to Vienna. But how to accomplish this is a hard question. It were well could I go myself. But I am a prisoner of war, and, until Magdeburg is in our power, this chain will clog me. Another must be sent—a messenger full of courage, determination, and hardihood. I have said this in my letter to Captain von Kimsky; he must seek such a man amongst our sworn friends of the citadel, and give him the sheet of paper I send in my letter. How harmless, how insignificant this sheet of paper seems! and still, were it to fall in the King of Prussia's hands, it would save him a strong fortress and several millions of thalers, for all the money of the Dresden treasury was brought to Magdeburg for safe-keeping. Ah! ah! how much would Frederick give for these two lines of writing, and how richly would he reward him who gave him the key to it! I will send the key by a different messenger, and therefore this second letter. But even if both my messengers were intercepted, all is not lost. I have notified Trenck also to write to Vienna for money and help. He must continue to be the shield behind which we intrench ourselves. Should the undertaking miscarry, we will lay it upon Trenck; should it succeed, it will be through me, and I will not be tardy in claiming my reward. The general of our order is old; should he, however, persist in living, his tenacious nature must—" He did not dare to finish the sentence; but a wild, demoniac smile supplied the words his lips dared not utter. He arose and walked several times up and down his chamber, completely lost in ambitious dreams of the future, for whose realization, as a true Jesuit, he shunned no means, mindful of the motto of their order: "The end sanctifies the means."

He saw a ring upon his hand—that ring, full of significance, before which kings had often bowed, which was to the Jesuits what the crown is to the king—the sacred sign of power and glory—the indisputable sign of invisible but supreme power. He saw himself, this ring upon his hand, subjugating nations, rewarding his friends, punishing his enemies. He suddenly awoke from his dreams, and remembered the present with a weary smile.

"I must not forget, in dreams of the future, the necessity for action. I have many important things to do this day. I must take these letters to Marietta, see her address and post them; then I must seek La Trouffle and receive from her leave of absence, on the plea of visiting a sick friend at Magdeburg. This will be a tedious undertaking, for she will not agree willingly to a separation without great persuasion. I have much influence over her, and a woman in love cannot refuse a request to the object of her tenderness. I will obtain, through Madame du Trouffle, a near and influential relative of the commandant of Berlin, permission to visit Magdeburg, and through Marietta Taliazuchi I will post my two important letters." He laughed aloud as he thought of these two women, so tenderly devoted to him, both so willing to be deceived by him.

"They love me in very different ways," said he, as he finished his toilet preparatory to going out. "Marietta Taliazuchi with the humility of a slave, Louise du Trouffle with the grateful passion of an elderly coquette. It would be a problem for a good arithmetician to solve, which of these two loves would weigh most. Marietta's love is certainly the more pleasant and comfortable, because the more humble. Like a faithful dog she lies at my feet; if I push her from me, she comes back, lies humbly down, and licks the foot that kicked her. Away, then, to her, to my tender Marietta."

Hiding his letters in his breast, he took his hat and hastened in the direction of Marietta's dwelling. She received him in her usual impassioned manner; she told him how she had suffered in their long separation; how the thought that he might be untrue to her, that he loved another had filled her with anguish.

Ranuzi laughed. "Still the same old song, Marietta; always full of doubt and distrust? Does the lioness still thirst after my blood? would she lacerate my faithless heart?"

Kneeling, as she often did, at his feet, she rested her arms on his knees; then dropping her head on her folded hands, she looked up at him.

"Can you swear that you are true to me?" said she, in a strange, sharp tone. "Can you swear that you love no other woman but me?"

"Yes, I can swear it!" said he, laughing.

"Then do so," cried she, earnestly.

"Tell me an oath and I will repeat it after you."

She looked at him firmly for several moments, and strange shadows crossed her emotional countenance.

Ranuzi did not perceive them; he was too inattentive, too confident of success, to entertain doubt or distrust.

"Hear the oath!" said she, after a pause. "'I, Count Carlo

Ranuzi, swear that I love no other woman but Marietta Taliazuchi; I swear that, since I have loved her, I have not nor ever shall kiss or breathe words of love to any other woman. May God's anger reach me, if my oath is false!'"

The words fell slowly, singly from her lips, and she gazed with unflinching eyes up at him.

Not a muscle in his countenance moved. Laughing gayly, he repeated her words; then bent and kissed her black, shiny hair. "Are you satisfied now, you silly child?"

"I am satisfied, for you have sworn," said she, rising from her knees.

"Will this quiet you now, Marietta?"

"Yes, forever."

"Well, then, now a moment to business. There are two important letters, my beautiful darling. You see how boundless my love for you is—I confide these letters to your care, and entreat you to post them as usual. My heart and my secrets are in your lovely hands."

He kissed the hands, and gave her the letters.

Marietta took and looked at them in a timid, fearful manner.

"Do they contain dangerous secrets?" said she.

"Dangerous in the extreme, my lovely one."

"Were they intercepted and opened, would you be liable to death?" said she, in a low, trembling voice.

He saw in these words only her solicitude and love for him.

"Certainly, I would be lost—I would have to die were these letters opened. But fear not, my beauteous Marietta—they will not be opened; no one would dream of intercepting the harmless letters you direct to your friends at Magdeburg. Apart from that, no one is aware of our close connection. We have carefully guarded the holy secret of our love; when your husband returns from Italy, this bad world will have no evil rumors to tell of us, and you will be enclosed in his arms as his faithful wife. When does he come?"

"I expect him in three weeks."

"Many glorious, quiet evenings will we enjoy together before his return. And now, farewell—I must leave you."

"You must leave me?"

"I must, Marietta."

"And where are you going?" said she, looking at him earnestly.

"Jealous again," said he, laughing. "Calm yourself, Marietta. I go to no woman. Besides this, have you not my oath?"

"Where are you going?" said she, with a sharp questioning look.

"I have an engagement to meet some friends—the meeting takes place in the house of a Catholic priest. Are you satisfied, Marietta?

or do you still fear that some dangerous rendezvous calls me from you?"

"I fear nothing," said she, smiling; "you have reassured me."

"Then, my beloved, I entreat you to command me to go, for if you do not, though I know I ought, I cannot leave you. But, no—first I will see you direct these letters."

"You shall," said she, taking a pen and directing them.

Ranuzi took the letters and examined them.

"This simple feminine address is the talisman that protects me and my secret. And this I owe to you, my darling, to you alone. But will you finish your work of mercy? Will you post these letters at once?"

"I will do so, Carlo."

"Will you swear it?" said he, laughing; "swear it to me by our love."

"I swear it—swear it by my love."

"And now, farewell, Marietta!—farewell for to-day. To-morrow I hope to see you again."

He took her in his arms and whispered words of love and tenderness in her ear. He did not notice, in his impatience to leave, how cold and quiet she was. He took his hat, and bowing gayly left the room.

She stood where he had left her, her arms hanging listlessly at her side, her head bowed upon her breast. She listened intently to his every movement. Now he was on the last stair, now in the hall—when he had crossed it he would be at the street door. With a wild shriek she fled from the room, and hastened down the steps.

"Carlo! Carlo! wait a moment!"

His hand was on the door-knob; he stood still and looked back. She was by his side—pale, with burning eyes and trembling lips, she threw her arms around him and kissed him passionately.

"Farewell, my Carlo!—farewell, thou lover of my soul, thou light of my eyes!"

She kissed his mouth, his eyes, his hands; she pressed him to her heart, and then she pushed him from her, saying, in cold, rough tones, "Go! go, I say!"

Without again looking at him she hurried up the stairs. Ranuzi, laughing and shaking his head at her foolishness, left the house with a contented and assured heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ACCUSATION.

THIS time Marietta did not call him back; she did not gaze after him from the window, as she was accustomed to do; she stood, pale as death, in the middle of the room, with panting breath, with flashing eyes; motionless, but with eager and expectant mien, as if listening to something afar off.

To what was Marietta listening? Perhaps to the echo of his step in the silent, isolated street; perhaps to the memories which, like croaking birds of death, hovered over her head, as if to lacerate and destroy even her dead happiness; perhaps she listened to those whispering voices which resounded in her breast and accused Ranuzi of faithlessness and treachery. And was he, then, really guilty? Had he committed a crime worthy of death?

Marietta was still motionless, hearkening to these whispered voices in her breast.

"I will deliberate yet once more," said she, walking slowly through the room, and sinking down upon the divan. "I will sit again in judgment upon him, and my heart, which in the fury of its pain still loves him, my heart shall be his judge."

And now she called back once again every thing to her remembrance. The golden, sunny stream of her happy youth passed in review before her, and the precious, blissful days of her first innocent love. She recalled all the agony which this love had caused her, to whose strong bonds she had ever returned, and which she had never been able to crush out of her heart. She thought of the day in which she had first seen Ranuzi in Berlin; how their hearts had found each other, and the old love, like a radiant Phœnix, had risen from the ashes of the past, to open heaven or hell to them both. She remembered with scornful agitation those happy days of their newfound youthful love; she repeated the ardent oaths of everlasting faith and love which Ranuzi had voluntarily offered; she remembered how she had warned him, how she had declared that she would revenge his treachery and inconstancy upon him; how indolently, how carelessly he had laughed, and called her his tigress, his anaconda. She then recalled how suddenly she had felt his love grow cold, how anxiously she had looked around to discover what had changed him—she could detect nothing. But an accident came to her assistance—a bad, malicious acident. During the war there were no operas given in Berlin, and Marietta was entirely unoccupied; for some time she had been giving singing

lessons—perhaps for distraction, perhaps to increase her income; she had, however, carefully preserved this secret from Ranuzi—in the unselfishness of her love she did not wish him to know that she had need of gold, lest he might offer her assistance.

One of her first scholars was Camilla von Kleist, the daughter of Madame du Trouffle, and soon teacher and scholar became warm friends. Camilla, still banished by her mother to the solitude of the nursery, complained to her new friend of the sorrows of her home and the weariness of her life. Carried away by Marietta's sympathy and flattering friendship, the young girl had complained to the stranger of her mother; in the desire to make herself appear an interesting sacrifice to motherly tyranny, she accused that mother relentlessly; she told Madame Taliazuchi that she was always treated as a child because her mother still wished to appear young; that she was never allowed to be seen in the saloon in the evening, lest she might ravish the worshippers and lovers of her mother. Having gone so far in her confidences, the pitiable daughter of this light-minded mother went so far as to speak of her mother's adorers. The last and most dangerous of these, the one she hated most bitterly, because he came most frequently and occupied most of her mother's time and thoughts, she declared to be the Count Ranuzi.

This was the beginning of those fearful torments which Marietta Taliazuchi had for some months endured—tortures which increased with the conviction that there was truly an understanding between Ranuzi and Madame du Trouffle; that Ranuzi, under the pretence of being overwhelmed with important business, refused to pass the evening with her, yet went regularly every evening to Madame du Trouffle.

Marietta had endured this torture silently; she denied herself the consolation of complaining to any one; she had the courage, with smiling lips, to dispute the truth of Camilla's narratives, and to accuse her of slander; she would have conviction, she longed for proof, and Camilla, excited by her incredulity, promised to give it.

One day, with a triumphant air, she handed Marietta a little note she had stolen from her mother's writing-desk. It was a poem, written in French, in which Ranuzi, with the most submissive love, the most glowing tenderness, besought the beautiful Louise to allow him to come in the evening, to kneel at her feet and worship as the faithful worship the mother of God.

Marietta read the poem several times, and then with quiet composure returned it to Camilla; but her cheeks were deadly pale, and her lips trembled so violently, that Camilla asked her kindly if she was not suffering.

"Yes," she replied, "I suffer, and we will postpone the lesson. I must go home and go to bed."

But Marietta did not go home. Beside herself, almost senseless with pain and rage, she wandered about through the streets, meditating, reflecting how she might revenge herself for this degradation, this faithlessness of her beloved.

At last she found the means; with firm step, with crimson cheeks, and a strange smile upon her tightly-compressed lips, she turned toward the castle. There she inquired for the Marquis d'Argens, and Ranuzi's evil genius willed that D'Argens should be found at that time in Berlin—he was generally only to be seen at Sans-Souci. Marietta did not know the marquis personally, but she had heard many anecdotes of the intellectual and amiable Provençal; she knew that the marquis and the king were warmly attached, and kept up a constant correspondence. For this reason, she addressed herself to D'Argens; she knew it was the easiest and quickest way to bring her communication immediately before the king. The marquis received her kindly, and asked her to make known her request.

At first Marietta was mute, regret and repentance overcame her; for a moment she almost resolved to be silent and to go away. Soon, however, her wrath was awakened, and armed her with the courage of despair. with panting breath, with strange disordered haste, she said: "I have come to tell you a secret—an important secret, which concerns the king."

The good marquis turned pale, and asked if it related to any attempt upon the life of the king?

"Not to his life; but it was a secret of the greatest importance," she replied. Then, however, when the marquis asked her to make a full disclosure, she seemed suddenly to see Ranuzi's handsome face before her; he looked softly, reproachfully at her with his great fathomless eyes, whose glance she ever felt in the very depths of her heart; she was conscious that the old love was again awake in her, and by its mighty power crowding out the passion of revenge. A lingering hesitation and faint-heartedness overcame her—confused and stammering, she said she would only confide her secret to the king himself, or to that person whom the king would authorize to receive it.

The marquis, in a vivacious manner, pressed her to speak, and made conjectures as to the quality of her secret. Marietta found herself involved in a net of cross-questions and answers, and took refuge at last in absolute silence. She rose and told the marquis she would return in eight days, to know whom the king had selected to receive her communication.

The eight days had now passed, and Marietta had, during this time, many struggles with her own heart—her ever newly awakening love pleaded eloquently for forgiveness—for the relinquishment of all her plans of vengeance.* She had almost resolved not to seek the marquis again, or if she did so, to say that she had been deceived—that the secret was nothing—that she had only been bantered and mystified. But now, all these softer, milder feelings seemed burnt out in the wild fire of revenge and scorn which blazed through her whole being. "He is a traitor—a shameless liar!" she said, pressing her small teeth firmly and passionately together; "he is a coward, and has not the courage to look a woman in the face and confess the truth when she demands it; he is a perjurer, for he took the oath which I exacted from him—he swore to love me alone and no other woman; he had the impudent courage to call down the vengeance of God upon himself if he should break this oath. Why do I hesitate longer?" cried she, springing from her seat; "the perjured traitor deserves that my betrayed and crushed heart should avenge itself. He called down the vengeance of God upon himself. Let it crush him to atoms!"

Now all was decision, courage, energy, and circumspection. She took the two letters she had received from Ranuzi and concealed them in her bosom, then dressed herself and left her dwelling.

With a firm step she passed through the streets which led to the castle. As she drew near the house of Madame du Trouffle, she hesitated, stood still, and looked up at the windows.

"If only this once he did not deceive me! If he is not here; if he told me the truth!" His countenance had been so open, so calm, so smiling when he said to her that he had a rendezvous with some friends at the Catholic priest's; and in a graceful, roguish mockery, asked her if she was jealous of that meeting. No, no! this time he was true. He could not have played the hypocrite with such smiling composure. Scarcely knowing what she did, Marietta entered

*The marquis, in one of his letters to the king, described his interview with Madame Taliazuchi, with great vivacity and minuteness, and expressed his own suspicions and conjectures; which, indeed, came very near the truth, and proved that, where he was warmly interested, he was a good inquisitor. He entreated Frederick not to look upon the matter carelessly, as in all probability there was treason on foot, which extended to Vienna. Madame Taliazuchi had much intercourse in Berlin with the captive Italian officers, and it might be that one of these officers was carrying on a dangerous correspondence with Vienna. In closing his letter, the marquis said: "Enfin, sire, quand il serait vrai que tout ceci ne fut qu'une bête italienne qui se serait échauffée, et qui aurait pris des chimères pour des vérités, ce qui pourrait encore bien être, cette femme ne paraît rien moins que prudente et tranquille. Je crois, cependant, que la peine qu'on aurait prise de savoir ce qu'elle veut déclarer serait si légère, qu'on ne la regretterait pas, quand même on découvrirait que cette femme n'est qu'une folle."—"Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand," vol. xix. p. 91.

the house, and asked if Camilla was at home—then hastened on to the door of Camilla's room.

The young girl advanced to meet her with a joyous greeting. "I am glad you have come, Marietta. Without you I should have been condemned to pass the whole evening shut up in my room, wearying myself with books. But I am resolved what I will do in future. If mamma insists upon my being a child still, and banishes me from the parlor when she has company, I will either run away, or I will invite company to amuse me. My cousin, Lieutenant Kienhause, is again in Berlin; his right arm is wounded, and the king has given him a furlough, and sent him home. When mamma is in the saloon, I will invite my cousin here." She laughed merrily, and drew Marietta dancing forward. "Now I have company, we will laugh and be happy."

"Who is in the saloon?" said Marietta, "and why are you banished to-day?"

"Well, because of this Italian count—this insufferable Ranuzi. He has been here for an hour, and mamma commanded no one to be admitted, as she had important business with the count."

"And you believe that he will remain the whole evening?" said Marietta.

"I know it; he remains every evening."

Marietta felt a cold shudder pass over her, but she was outwardly calm.

"Poor child!" said she, "you are indeed to be pitied, and, if you really desire it, you shall have my society; but first, I have a commission to execute, and then I will bring some notes, and we will sing together." She kissed Camilla upon the brow, and withdrew.

The last moment of respite had expired for Ranuzi; there was no longer a ray of mercy in Marietta's heart. Rushing forward, she soon reached the castle, and announced herself to the marquis. She was introduced into his study, and the marquis advanced to meet her, smiling, and with an open letter in his hand.

"You come at the right time, madame," said he; "an hour since I received this letter from his majesty."

"Has the king named the person to whom I am to confide my secret?" she said, hastily.

"Yes, madame, his majesty has been pleased to appoint me for that purpose."

"Let me see the letter," said Marietta, extending her hand.

The marquis drew back. "Pardon me," said he, "I never allow the king's letters to pass out of my own hands, and no one but myself can see them. But I will read you what the king says in relation to this affair, and you will surely believe my word of honor.

Listen, then: 'Soyez, marquis, le dépositaire de mes secrets, le confidant des mystères de Madame Taliazuchi, l'oreille du trône, et le sanctuaire où s'annonceront les complots de mes ennemis.' * Madame, you see that I am fully empowered by the king to receive your confidence, and I am ready to hear what you will have the goodness to relate." He led her to a divan, and seated himself opposite to her.

"Tell the king to be on his guard!" said Marietta, solemnly. "A great and wide-spread conspiracy threatens him. I have been made a tool by false pretences; by lies and treachery my confidence was surreptitiously obtained. Oh, my God!" cried she, suddenly springing up; "now all is clear. I was nothing but an instrument of his intrigues; only the weak means made use of to attain his object. He stole my love, and made of it a comfortable, convenient robe with which to conceal his politics. Alas! alas! I have been his *postillon de politique.*" With a loud, wild cry, she sank back upon the divan, and a torrent of tears gushed from her eyes.

The marquis sprang up in terror, and drew near the door; he was now fully convinced that the woman was mad.

"Madame," said he, "allow me to call for assistance. You appear to be truly suffering, and in a state of great excitement. It will be best for you, without doubt, to forget all these political interests, and attend to your physical condition."

Marietta, however, had again recovered her presence of mind; she glanced with a wan smile into the anxious countenance of the marquis.

"Fear nothing, sir, I am not mad; return to your seat. I have no weapons, and will injure no one. The dagger which I carry is piercing my own heart, and from time to time the wound pains; that is all. I promise you to make no sound, to be gentle and calm —come, then."

The marquis returned, but seated himself somewhat farther from the signora.

"I tell you," said Marietta, panting for breath, "that he made use of my credulity—made me a tool of his political intrigues—these

* "I will give the conclusion of this letter which the polite marquis did not read aloud: 'Pour quitter le style oriental, je vous avertis que vous aurez l'oreille rebattue de misères et de petites intrigues de prisonniers obscurs et qui ne vaudront pas le temps que vous perdrez a les entendre. Je connais ces espèces de personnes du genre de Madame Taliazuchi—elles envisagent les petites choses comme très-importantes; elles sont charmées de figurer en politique, de jouer un rôle, de faire les capables d'étaler avec faste le zèle de leur fidélité. J'ai vu souvent que ces beaux secrets révélés n'ont été que des intrigues pour nuire au tiers ou au quart à des gens auxquelles ces sortes de personnes veulent du mal. Ainsi, quoique cette femme vous puisse dire, gardez-vous bien d'y ajouter foi, et que votre cervelle provençal ne s'échauffe pas au premier bruit de ces récits.'"—Œuvres, vol xix., p. 92.

intrigues which threaten the lands if not the life of the king. The treason I will disclose would place an important fortress in the hands of the Austrians."

"And you are convinced that this is no chimera?" said the marquis, with an incredulous smile.

"I am convinced of it, and I have the incontestable proof with me." She took the two letters which she had received from Ranuzi, and gave them to the marquis. "Take them, and send them to the king; but, not to-morrow, not when it is convenient, but to-day; even this hour. If you are not prompt, in eight days King Frederick will be a fortress the poorer. Besides this, say to his majesty to be ever on his guard against the captive officers in Berlin, especially on his guard against my countryman, Count Ranuzi. He is the soul of this enterprise; he has originated this daring undertaking, and, if this falls to pieces, he will commence anew. He is a dangerous enemy—a serpent, whose sting is most deadly, most to be feared when he seems most gentle, most quiet. Say to King Frederick he will do well to protect himself from the traitor, the Austrian spy, Ranuzi." Marietta stood up, and bowing to the marquis, she advanced to the door. D'Argens held her back.

"Madame," said he, "if these things are really so, Count Ranuzi is a man to be feared, and we should make sure of him."

"He is indeed a dangerous man," said Marietta, with a peculiar smile. "Ask the beautiful Madame du Trouffle; she will confirm my words."

The black, flashing eyes of the marquis fixed themselves searchingly upon the face of the signora. He remembered that the king had warned him to be upon his guard as to the communication of Madame Taliazuchi, that such mysteries were often nothing more than feigned intrigues, by which the discoverer sought to bring sorrow and downfall to an enemy.

"Ah, signora! I understand now," said the marquis; "you did not come here for patriotism or love for Prussia or her king, but from frantic jealousy; not to serve King Frederick, but to overthrow Ranuzi."

Marietta shrugged her shoulders with a contemptuous expression.

"I am an Italian," said she, laconically.

"And the Italians love revenge," said the marquis.

"When one dares to injure them—yes."

"This Count Ranuzi has dared to injure you?"

A flash of scorn flamed for a moment in her eyes, then disappeared. "Would I otherwise have betrayed him?" said she. "I am an Italian, and you cannot ask that I shall feel patriotism for King Frederick or for Prussia. Count Ranuzi is my countryman;

judge, then, how deeply I have been injured when I betray him, and give him over to death."

"To death? it is also then a crime worthy of death which these letters will disclose to the king? You do not deceive yourself? Your thirst for revenge does not make these things appear blacker, more important than they really are?"

"No, I do not deceive myself. I speak but the simple truth."

"Then," said the marquis, with horror, "it is dangerous to leave Ranuzi at liberty. I must apply to the commandant of Berlin, and ask that he be arrested upon my responsibility."

Marietta was already at the door, but these words of the marquis arrested her. With her hand resting upon the bolt, she stood and turned her pale face back to D'Argens. "Certainly, it would be best and surest to arrest him instantly," said she; and her heart bounded with delight when she said to herself, with cruel pleasure: "When once arrested, he can go no more to Madame du Trouffle."

The marquis did not reply, but he stepped thoughtfully through the room. Marietta's eyes followed every movement with a fiery glance. At length the marquis stood before her.

"I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of arresting this man. I do not know that these letters, which I shall send to the king, are really as dangerous as you say. The king must decide; I will send them off by a courier to-day. But, in every event, Ranuzi must be watched, and you shall be his guard. You must see that he does not escape. I make you answerable. Ranuzi must not leave Berlin, and when the king's answer is received, he must be found here."

"You shall find him with me," said she; "and if not, I shall at least be able to tell you where he is. Fear nothing; he shall not escape! I am his guard! When you receive the reply of the king, have the goodness to inform me. This is the only reward I demand." *

"I will inform you, madame," said the marquis, opening the door; "and, as to the Count Ranuzi, I read in your features that you hate him with a bitter hatred, and will not allow him to escape."

* D'Argens wrote to the king: "Si votre majesté ne m'avait point écrit en propres termes. Quoique cette femme puisse vous dire, gardez-vous bien d'y ajouter foi. J'aurai prié le commandant de faire arrêter le nommé Ranuzi jusqu'à ce qu'elle eut mandé ce qu'elle veut qu'on en fasse; cet homme me paraissant un espion de plus aérés. Mais je me suis contenté de dire à Madame Taliazuchi que si cet homme sortait de Berlin, avant la réponse de votre majesté elle en répondrait, et elle m'a assuré qu'elle le retiendrait."—Œuvres, vol. xix., p. 93.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVENGE.

FIVE days had passed since Marietta's interview with the marquis. They had wrought no change in her heart; not for a single instant had her thirst for revenge been allayed. Her hatred of Ranuzi seemed to have become more intense, more passionate, since she understood his plans—since she had learned that he had never loved her, and that she was merely the instrument of his intrigues. Since that time she had watched his every thought and deed.

One day while apparently embracing him, and whispering words of endearment in his ear, she had secretly drawn a folded paper from his pocket, which had just been brought to him by a strange servant who, having vainly sought him at his own house, had followed him to that of Marietta. Having thus obtained the paper, she made an excuse for leaving the room in order to inspect it. She carefully closed the door of the room in which Ranuzi sat, and then examined the paper. After reading it, she drew her note-book from her pocket, and hastily tearing out a leaf, she wrote upon it with a pencil: "Lose no time, if you do not wish him to escape. He has received to-day, through the agency of Madame du Trouffle, the necessary passport and permission to go to Magdeburg. I have no longer the power to detain him. What is done must be done quickly."

She folded the paper and passed cautiously through the hall and into the kitchen where her maid was. "Listen, Sophie," she said; "take this note and go as quickly as you can to the castle and ask for the Marquis d'Argens. You must give the note into his own hands, and if you bring me an answer within the hour, I will reward you as if I were a queen. Do not speak, only go."

The maid hurried down the steps, and Marietta returned, smilingly, to Ranuzi, who received her with reproaches for her long absence.

"I have arranged a little supper for us, and have sent my maid to obtain some necessary articles. You will not leave me to-day, as you always do, to go to your conference with the Catholic priest."

"I would not, Marietta, but I must," said Ranuzi. "Believe me, my dear child, if I followed the dictates of my heart, I would never leave this room, which in my thoughts I always call my paradise, and in which I enjoy my only bright and happy moments. But what would you have, my angel? It is not ordained that men should have undisturbed possession of the joys of paradise. Mother

Eve sinned, and we must expiate her misdeeds. I must leave you again to-day to join that conference which you so heartily detest."

"But not yet," she said, tenderly, putting her arms about his neck. "You will not leave me yet?"

Thus besought, he promised to remain. Never was he more amiable, more brilliant, more attentive, or more tender. Never was Marietta gayer, more excited, or more enchanting. Both had their reasons for this—both had their intentions. Love smiled upon their lips, but it was not in their hearts—each wished to deceive the other. Ranuzi wished to quiet every suspicion by his tenderness—she must not dream that this was their last meeting, and that he intended leaving Berlin this night, perhaps forever. Marietta wished to chain him to her side and prevent his departure.

Time flew by amid gay laughter and tender jests, and at length Marietta heard the house-door open and hurried steps mounting the stairway. It was the maid who had returned. Marietta's heart beat so violently that she could scarcely conceal her emotion.

"The maid has returned with her purchases," she said, hastily; "I will go out and tell her that you cannot remain with me to-day." She left the room and met Sophie in the hall, who was quite out of breath with her hurried walk, and who handed her a note. Marietta broke the seal with trembling hands. It contained only these words: "Keep him but a few moments longer, and one will arrive who will release you from your watch, and relieve you forever from your enemy by bearing him to prison. The answer of the one to whom I sent your paper has come; he is condemned."

"Very well, Sophie," said Marietta, concealing the paper in her bosom. "When the count leaves, you shall receive your reward. Now listen; the soldiers are coming. As soon as you hear them on the steps, you must tap at my door, that I may know they have arrived."

She hastened back to Ranuzi, but she no longer smiled—she no longer approached him with open arms—but she advanced toward him with flashing eyes, with her arms folded haughtily across her breast, and her countenance pale with passion.

"Ranuzi, the hour of revenge has come! You have most shamefully betrayed and deceived me—you have mocked my love—you have trodden my heart under foot. Lies were upon your lips—lies were in your heart. And whilst you swore to me that you loved no other, you had already betrayed me to a woman. I am acquainted with Madame du Trouffle, and I know that you visit her every evening. This was the conference with the Catholic fathers, for whose sake you left me. Oh, I know all—all! I will not reproach you; I will not tell you of the martyrdom I suffered—of the wretched days

and nights through which I wept and sighed, until at length I overcame the love I had borne you. That suffering is passed. But you have not forgotten that I once said to you: 'Should you forsake me, or turn faithlessly from me, I will be revenged.'"

"I have not forgotten," said Ranuzi, "and I know that you will fulfil your promise; but before you do so—before you point me out to the government as a dangerous spy—you will listen to my defence, and only then if you are not satisfied, will you condemn me, and revenge yourself."

"I have all-sufficient proof," she said. "Day by day, hour by hour, have these proofs been forced upon me, as the contents of the poisoned cup are forced upon the condemned man. My love and happiness are dead, but you also shall die—you also shall suffer as I have done. My love was insufficient to keep for me a place in your memory; perhaps my revenge will do so. When you are wretched and miserable, think of me and repent."

"Repent of what?" he asked, proudly. "I have done nothing of which I am ashamed—nothing of which I repent. I have offered up my entire life, my every thought and desire, to a holy, a noble cause. To it I have subjected all my feelings, wishes, and hopes, and had it been necessary, I would without tears have sacrificed all that was dearest to me on earth. It became necessary for the good of this cause that I should appear to betray your love. A plan had been formed in which this woman you have just named could alone aid me. I dared not ask my heart what it suffered, for my head told me that this woman was necessary to me, and it became my duty to obtain her assistance by any means. So I became the daily companion of Madame du Trouffle, so—"

A light tap at the door interrupted the count, and startled him inexplicably.

"What does that mean?" he asked, turning pale.

Marietta laughed aloud. "That means," she said, slowly and scornfully, "that you will not go to Magdeburg to-morrow—that you cannot make use of the passport which your beloved Madame du Trouffle obtained for you. Ah, you wished to leave me secretly—you did not wish me to suspect your intended departure. You were mistaken, Ranuzi. You will remain in Berlin, but you will never go to *her* again. I will prevent that."

At this moment loud knocking was heard at the door, and two policemen entered the room without waiting for an invitation, and through the open door armed soldiers might be seen in the hall guarding the entrance.

When Ranuzi first beheld these servants of justice, he shuddered and became deathly pale, but as they approached him, he recovered

his wonted composure, and advanced proudly and coldly to meet them.

"Are you Count Ranuzi?" asked one of the policemen.

"I am," he said, calmly.

"I arrest you in the name of the king; you are our prisoner."

"With what offence am I charged?" asked he, as he slowly placed his hand in his bosom.

"The court-martial will inform you."

"Ah, I am to be tried by a court-martial. Spies and conspirators are always thus tried. I am charged then with spying and conspiring," cried Ranuzi, and then slowly turning to Marietta, he asked: "And this is your work?"

"Yes; this is my work," she said, triumphantly.

"You must come now," said the policeman, roughly, as he stepped nearer to Ranuzi, at the same time giving his companion a sign to do the same. "Come immediately and quietly. Do not compel us to use force."

"Force," cried Ranuzi, shrugging his shoulders, as he drew his hand from his bosom and pointed a pistol toward the policemen, from which they shrunk back terrified. "You see that I need not fear force," he said. "If you dare to approach nearer or lay your hand on me I will fire on both of you, for happily my pistol has more than one ball, and it never fails. You see that we are playing a dangerous game, upon whose issue may depend your lives as well as mine. I can shoot you if I desire it, or I can direct this weapon against my own brow if I wish to avoid investigation or imprisonment. But I promise you to do neither the one nor the other, if you will give me the time to say a few words to this lady."

"Be quick, then," said the policeman, "or I will call in the soldiers, and they can shoot you as easily as you could shoot us."

Ranuzi shrugged his shoulders. "You will be very careful not to shoot me. The dead do not speak, and it is very important for my judges that I should speak. Go to that door; I give my word that I will follow you."

As if to strengthen his words, he raised the hand which held the pistol, and the two men withdrew with threatening glances, to the door.

Ranuzi then turned again to Marietta, who turned her great flashing eyes upon him with an expression of anger and astonishment, mixed with hatred and admiration.

"Marietta," he said, gently. She trembled at the sound of his voice. He perceived this, and smiled. "Marietta," he repeated, "you have betrayed me; you have revenged your love! I do not

reproach you, my anaconda, but I pray you to tell me one thing; did you send the last letters which I gave you to the post?"

"No," she replied, compelling her eyes, with a mighty effort, to meet his

"Wretch! What did you do with them."

"I sent them to the King of Prussia."

Ranuzi uttered a shriek, and fell back a step. "Then I am indeed lost," he murmured, "as well as that unhappy creature, who pines for light and freedom. Poor Trenck! Poor Amelia! All is lost; all through the jealousy of this wretched woman. I tell you, Marietta," he continued aloud, as he placed his hand heavily on her shoulder, "it is not necessary that I should curse you, you will do that yourself. This hour will act as deadly poison on your heart, of which you will die. It is true, you have revenged yourself. To-day you rejoice in this, for you believe that you hate me, but to-morrow you will repent; to-morrow grief will overtake you, and it will grow with every day—you will feel that you must love me for ever and ever; you must love me, because you have wrought my ruin. Yes, you are right—you have discovered the means to keep yourself in my remembrance. In my dungeon I will think of you. I will do so, and curse you; but you also will think of me; and when you do, you will wring your hands and curse yourself, for revenge will not kill the love in your heart. Be that your punishment. Farewell!"

He passed before her, and quietly approached the policemen. "Come, gentlemen, I am quite ready to follow you; and that you may be entirely at ease I will leave my pistol here. It is my legacy to that lady—my last souvenir. Perhaps she may use it in the future."

He placed the pistol upon her writing-table and hastily approached the door. "Come, gentlemen; I am your prisoner!"

He signed to them to follow him, and walked proudly through the hall.

Marietta stood there trembling and deadly pale—her eyes dilated, her lips opened, as if to utter a shriek. Thus she watched him, breathless, and as if enchained with horror.

Now she saw him open the door of the hall, and throwing back at her one cold, flashing glance, he went out, followed by the police and the soldiers.

"He is gone! he is gone!" she shrieked, as if in a frenzy. "They are leading him to imprisonment—perhaps to death. Oh, to death! It is I who have murdered him. He is right. I am indeed cursed. I have murdered him, and I love him." And with a wild shriek she sank fainting to the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

TRENCK.

Trenck still lived; neither chains nor years of loneliness had broken his strength or bowed his spirit. His tall, gigantic form had shrunk to a skeleton; his hair had whitened and hung around his hollow face like an ashen veil. Heavy chains clasped his feet and his throat; a broad iron band encircled his waist, which was attached to the wall by a short chain—a thick bar held his hands apart; but still he lived. For years he had paced, with short, restless steps, this little space that covered his grave; but he smiled derisively at the coarse stone which bore his name.

Trenck still lived. He lived because he had a fixed desire, a grand aim in view—he thirsted for freedom, and believed it attainable. Trenck could not die, for without was liberty, the sun, life, and honor. He would not die; for to be willing to die, he must first have lived. His life had been so short—a few fleeting years of youth, of careless enjoyment—a joyous dream of love and ambition! This had been his fate. Then came long, weary years of imprisonment—a something which he knew not, but it was not life—had crept to him in his prison, and with a cruel hand marked years upon his brow—years through which he had not lived, but suffered. And still he remained young in spite of gray hairs and wrinkles. He glowed with hope and defiance; his sluggish blood was warmed from time to time with new hopes, new expectations. His imagination painted wonderful pictures of future happiness. This hope always remained smiling and vigorous; notwithstanding his many disappointments—his many useless attempts to escape, Trenck still hoped for freedom. As often as the subterranean passages which he dug were discovered, he recommenced his work, and dug new ones; when the sentinels whom he had won by gold and flattery were detected and punished, he found means to obtain other friends.

Truly, friends did not fail; the buried but still living prisoner had friends who never forgot him; bold, loving friends, risking their lives for him. The mighty power of his great misfortunes won him friends. The soldiers who guarded him were seized with shuddering horror and pity at the sight of this sunken form, reminding them of the picture of the skeleton and the hour-glass which hung in the village church. Trenck knew how to profit by this. The officers, who came every day to inspect his prison, were charmed and amazed by the freshness of his spirit, his bright conversation, and gay remarks. These interviews were the only interruption to

the dulness of their garrison life. They came to him to be cheered. Not being willing to sit with him in the dark, they brought their lights with them; they opened the door of his cell that they might not be obliged to remain with him in the damp, putrid air. They wondered at his firmness and courage; they sympathized with his youth and loneliness, and this sympathy made for him earnest, useful friends, who revelled in the thought that Trenck's renewed attempts at escape would at last be crowned with happy results, that he would obtain his freedom.

He was on the eve of a great day. To-morrow he would live again, to-morrow he would be free; this time it was no chimera, no dream—he must succeed.

"Yes, my plan cannot fail," murmured Trenck, as he sat upon his stone seat and gazed at the iron door, which had just closed behind the Commandant Bruckhäusen. "My cruel jailer has discovered nothing, carefully as he searched my cell; this time I have dug no mines, broken no walls; this time I shall pass through that door, my comrades will greet me joyfully, and the poor prisoner shall be the mighty commander of the fortress. Only one night more, one single night of patience, and life, and love, and the world shall again belong to me. Oh, I feel as if I would go mad with joy. I have had strength to endure misfortunes, but perhaps the rapture of freedom may be fatal. My God! my God! if I should lose my senses! if the light of the sun should scorch my brain! if the hum of the busy world should crush my spirit!"

He lifted his hands in terror to his brow; he felt as if wrapped in flames, as if fire were rising from his brain; the chains rattled around him with unearthly sounds. "The slightest error, the least forgetfulness would endanger my plan. I will be quiet—I will repeat once more all that we have agreed upon. But first away with these slavish chains, to-morrow I shall be a free man; I will commence my *rôle* to-day."

He removed the handcuffs, and with his free right hand loosened the girdle from his waist, at the point where the blacksmith, who fastened it upon him, told him it might be opened by a pressure light as a feather. Now he was free; he stretched with delight his thin, meagre form, and let his arms swing in the air as if to prove their muscle.

This was a sweet, a wonderful prelude to freedom; many weeks and months he had worked upon these chains to prepare for the moment of freedom. Now these chains had fallen. He was already a free man: he cared not for these dark, damp walls. He did not see them; he was already without, where the sun was shining, the birds were singing; where the blue arch of heaven looked down

upon the blooming earth. What did he care for the death-like stillness which surrounded him? he heard the noise in the streets; he saw men running here and there in busy haste; he listened to their bright conversation, their merry laughter; he mixed among them with lively greeting, and shared their joys and cares.

Suddenly he again pressed his brow fearfully, and cried; "I shall go mad! A thousand dancing pictures and happy faces are swarming around me; I shall go mad! But no, I will control myself; I will be calm." He raised his head with his accustomed bold defiance. "I will look freedom in the face; my eyelids shall not quiver and my heart shall beat calmly. I will be quiet and thoughtful. I will think it all over once more. Listen to me, oh friend! you, who have heard all my sighs and my despair; you, who know my misery; listen to me, oh gloomy cell. You have always been faithful; you have never wished to forsake or leave me; and when I struggled to escape, you called me always back. But this is our last day together; you shall hear my confession, I will tell you all my plans, by what means I shall escape from you, my true friend, my dark, dreary cell. Know first that this garrison is composed of nine hundred men, who are much dissatisfied. It will not be difficult to win them, particularly if they are well bribed. Besides this, there are two majors and two lieutenants conspiring with me; they will tell their soldiers what to do. The guard at the star-port, is composed of but fifteen men, and if they do not obey me willingly, we will know how to compel obedience. At the end of the star-port lies the city gate. At this only twelve men and one officer are stationed; these we shall easily overpower. On the other side, close to the gate, the Austrian Captain von Kimsky is awaiting me with the remainder of the prisoners of war. All the officers, who have pledged themselves to assist my undertaking, are concealed in a safe house rented for this purpose. At my first call they will rush forward and fall upon the guard; we will overpower them and enter the city. There other friends await us; one of them, under some pretext, holds in his quarters arms for his company, and at my call he will join me with his armed band. Oh my God! my God! I see every thing so plainly and clearly before me. I see myself rushing joyfully through the streets, dashing into the casemates, which contain nine thousand prisoners. I call to them: 'Up, comrades, up; I am Frederick von Trenck, your captain and your leader; arm yourselves and follow me.' I hear them greet me joyfully and cry, 'Long live Trenck!' They take their arms and we rush to the other casemates, where seven thousand Austrian and Russian prisoners are confined. We free them, and I head a little army of sixteen thousand men. Magdeburg is mine; the fortress, the magazine of

the army, the treasury, the arsenal, all is in our power. I shall conquer all for Maria Theresa. Oh, King Frederick! King Frederick! I shall avenge myself on you for these long years of misery, for the martyrdom of this fearful imprisonment. Trenck will not be obliged to leave Magdeburg; he will drive away the Prussians, and make himself master."

He laughed so loudly that the old walls echoed the sound, and a wailing sigh seemed to glide along the building. Trenck started and looked timidly around him.

"I am still alone," he murmured, "no one has heard my words; no, no one but you," he continued cheerfully, "my old silent friend, my faithful prison. To-morrow morning the officer on guard will enter and order the sentinels to remove the bed; as soon as they enter I shall rush out and lock the door. The sentinels being locked up, I put on the clothes which are lying in readiness for me in the passage, and then forward to my soldiers. I shall distribute gold freely among them—a friend will meet me with the money at the house of Captain von Kleist, and if he has not sufficient, Amelia has richly supplied me. Arise, arise from your grave, my secret treasures."

He crouched close to the wall and removed the mortar and chalk carefully; he then drew out a stone and took from under it a purse full of gold.

His eye, accustomed to the darkness, saw the gold through the silk net; he nodded to it and laughed with delight as he poured it out and played madly with it. His countenance suddenly assumed an earnest expression.

"Poor Amelia," he murmured softly, "you have sacrificed your life, your beauty, and your youth for me. With never-failing zeal you have moved around me like my guardian angel, and how am I repaying you? By taking from your brother, King Frederick, his finest fortress, his money, his provisions; by compelling you and yours to fly from a city which no longer belongs to you, but to the Empress of Austria, your enemy. With your money I have taken this city; Amelia, you are ignorant of this now, and when you learn it, perhaps you will curse me and execrate the love which has poisoned your whole life. Oh, Amelia! Amelia, forgive me for betraying you also. My unfortunate duty is forcing me onward, and I must obey. Yes," he said, springing from his seat, "I must yield to my fate, I must be free again—I must be a man once more; I can sit no longer like a wild animal in his cage, and tell my grief and my despair to the cold walls. I must reconquer life—I must again see the sun, the world, and mankind—I must live, suffer, and act."

He walked violently to and fro, his whole being was in feverish

expectation and excitement, and he felt alarmed. Suddenly he remained standing; pressing his two hands against his beating temples, he murmured:

"I shall indeed go mad. Joy at my approaching deliverance confuses my poor head; I will try to sleep, to be calm—collect my strength for to-morrow."

He lay down upon his miserable couch, and forced himself to be quiet and silent—not to speak aloud to himself in his lonely cell, as he was accustomed to do. Gradually the mad tension of his nerves relaxed, gradually his eyes closed, and a soft, beneficial slumber came over him.

All was still in the dark cell; nothing was to be heard but the loud breathing of the sleeper; but even in sleep, visions of life and liberty rejoiced his heart—his face beamed with heavenly joy; he murmured softly, "I am free!—free at last!"

The hours passed away, but Trenck still slumbered—profound stillness surrounded him. The outer world had long since been awake—the sun was up, and had sent a clear beam of its glory through the small, thickly-barred window, even into the comfortless, desolate cell, and changed the gloom of darkness into a faint twilight.

CHAPTER X.

"TRENCK, ARE YOU THERE?"

TRENCK slept. Sleep on, sleep on, unfortunate prisoner, for while asleep you are free and joyous; when you awake, your happy dreams will vanish; agony and despair will be your only companions.

Listen! there are steps in the passage; Trenck does not hear them—he still sleeps. But now a key is turned, the door is opened, and Trenck springs from his pallet.

"Are you there, my friends? Is all ready?"

But he totters back with a fearful shriek, his eyes fixed despairingly upon the door. There stood Von Bruckhäusen, the prison commandant, beside him several officers, behind them a crowd of soldiers.

This vision explained all to Trenck. It told him that his plan had miscarried—that again all had been in vain. It told him that he must remain what he was, a poor, wretched prisoner—more wretched than before, for they would now find out that when alone he could release himself from his chains. They would find his gold,

which he had taken from its hiding-place, and was now lying loosely upon the floor.

"I am lost!" said he, covering his face with his hands, and throwing himself upon his bed.

A malignant smile brightened up Von Bruckhäusen's disagreeable countenance, as his eye took in the broken chains, the glittering gold, and the despairing prisoner. He then ordered the soldiers to raise the chains and fasten them on him.

Trenck made no resistance. He suffered them quietly to adjust his iron belt, to fasten the chain around his neck. He seemed insensible to all that was passing. This fearful blow had annihilated him; and the giant who, but a short time before, had thought to conquer the world, was now a weak, trembling, defenceless child. When he was ordered to rise to have the chains annexed to his iron girdle, and fastened to the wall, he rose at once, and stretched out his hand for the manacles. Now the commandant dared approach Trenck; he had no fear of the chained lion, he could jeer at and mock without danger. He did it with the wrath of a soul hard and pitiless; with the deep, unutterable hate of an implacable enemy; for Trenck was his enemy, his much-feared enemy; he drove sleep from his eyes—he followed him in his dreams. Often at midnight Von Bruckhäusen rose in terror from his couch, because he dreamed that Trenck had escaped, and that he must now take his place in that dark, fearful tomb. Surrounded by gay companions, he would turn pale and shudder at the thougth of Trenck's escaping—Trenck, whose fearful cell was then destined to be his. This constant fear and anxiety caused the commandant to see in Trenck not the king's prisoner, but his own personal enemy, with whom he must do battle to his utmost strength, with all the wrath and fear of a timid soul. With a cold, malicious smile he informed him that his plot had been discovered, that his mad plan was known; he had wished to take the fortress of Magdeburg and place upon it the Austrian flag. With a jeering smile he held up to him the letter Trenck had sent to his friend in Vienna, in which, without mentioning names, he had made a slight sketch of his plan.

"Will you deny that you wrote this letter?" cried the commandant, in a threatening voice.

Trenck did not answer. His head was bowed upon his breast; he was gazing down in silence

"You will be forced to name your accomplices," cried the enraged commandant; "there is no palliation for a traitor, and if you do not name them at once, I shall subject you to the lash."

An unearthly yell issued from Trenck's pale lips, and as he raised his head, his countenance was expressive of such wild, such terrible

rage, that Bruckhäusen drew away from him in affright. Trenck had awakened from his lethargy; he had found again his strength and energy, he was Trenck once more—the Trenck feared by Von Bruckhäusen, though lying in chains, the Trenck whom nothing could bend, nothing discourage.

"He who dares to whip me shall die," said he, gazing wildly at the commandant. "With my nails, with my teeth, will I kill him."

"Name your accomplices!" cried Bruckhäusen, stamping upon the ground in his rage.

It was Trenck who now laughed. "Ah, you think to intimidate me with your angry voice," said he. "You think your word has power to make me disclose that which I wish to keep secret. You think I will betray my friends, do you? Learn what a poor, weak, incapable human being you are, for not one of the things you wish shall occur. No, I shall not be so contemptible as to betray my friends. Were I to do so, then were I a traitor deserving of this wretched cell, of these fearful chains, for I would then be a stranger to the first, the holiest virtue, gratitude. But no, I will not. I was innocent when these chains were put on me—innocent I will remain."

"Innocent!" cried the commandant; "you who wished to deliver to the enemy a fortress of your sovereign! You call yourself innocent?"

Trenck raised himself from his bed, and threw back his head proudly. "I am no longer a subject of the King of Prussia," said he; "he is no longer my sovereign. Many years ago I was thrown into prison at Glatz without court-martial or trial. When I escaped, all my property was confiscated. If I had not sought my bread elsewhere, I would have starved to death, or gone to ruin. Maria Theresa made me a captain in her army—to her I gave my allegiance. She alone is my sovereign. I owe no duty to the King of Prussia—he condemned me unheard—by one act he deprived me of bread, honor, country, and freedom. He had me thrown into prison, and fettered like some fearful criminal. He has degraded me to an animal that lies grovelling in his cage, and who only lives to eat, who only eats to live. I do not speak to you, sir commandant," continued he—"I speak, soldiers, to you, who were once my comrades in arms. I would not have you call Trenck a traitor. Look at me; see what the king has made of me; and then tell me, was I not justified in fleeing from these tortures? Even if Magdeburg had been stormed, and thousands of lives lost, would you have called me a traitor? Am I a traitor because I strive to conquer for myself what you, what every man, receives from God as his holy right—

my freedom?" While he spoke, his pale, wan countenance beamed with inspiration.

The soldiers were struck and touched with it—their low murmurs of applause taught the commandant that he had committed a mistake in having so many witnesses to his conversation with the universally pitied and admired prisoner.

"You will not name your accomplices?" said he.

"No," said Trenck, "I will not betray my friends. And what good would it do you to know their names? You would punish them, and would thereby sow dragons' teeth from which new friends would rise for me. For undeserved misfortune, and unmerited reproach, make for us friends in heaven and on earth. Look there, sir commandant—look there at your soldiers. They came here indifferent to me—they leave as my friends; and if they can do no more, they will pray for me."

"Enough! enough of this," cried the commandant. "Be silent! And you," speaking to the soldiers, "get out of here! Send the blacksmith to solder these chains at once. Go into the second passage—I want no one but the blacksmith."

The soldiers withdrew, and the smith entered with his hot coals, his glowing iron, and his panful of boiling lead. The commandant leaned against the prison-door gazing at the smith; Trenck was looking eagerly at the ceiling of his cell watching the shadows thrown there by the glowing coals.

"It is the *ignus fatuus* of my freedom," said he, with a weary smile. "It is the fourth time they have danced on this ceiling—it is the fourth time my chains have been forged. But I tell you, commandant, I will break them again, and the shadows flickering on these walls will be changed to a glorious sun of freedom—it will illuminate my path so that I can escape from this dungeon, in which I will leave nothing but my curse for you my cruel keeper."

"You have not, then, despaired?" said the commandant, with a cold smile. "You will still attempt to escape?"

Trenck fixed his keen, sparkling eyes upon Von Bruckhäusen, and stretching out his left arm to the smith, he said: "Listen, sir commandant, to what I have to say to you, and may my words creep like deadly poison through your veins! Hear me; as soon as you have left my cell—as soon as that door has closed behind you—I will commence a new plan of escape. You have thrown me in a cell under the earth. The floor in my other cell was of wood—I cut my way through it. This is of stone—I shall remove it. You come daily and search my room to see if there is not some hole or some instrument hidden by which I might effect my escape. Nevertheless I shall escape. God created the mole, and of it I will learn how

to burrow in the ground, and thus I will escape. You will see that I have no instruments, no weapons, but God gave me what He gave the mole—He gave my fingers nails, and my mouth teeth; and if there is no other way, I will make my escape by them."

"It is certainly very kind of you to inform me of all this," cried the commandant. "Be assured I shall not forget your words. I shall accommodate myself to them. You seek to escape—I seek to detain you here. I am convinced I shall find some means of assuring myself every quarter of an hour that your nails and teeth have not freed you. The smith's work I see is done, and we dare entertain the hope that for the present you will remain with us. Or perhaps you mean to bite your chains in two as soon as I leave?"

"God gave Samson strength to crush with his arms the temple columns," said Trenck, gazing at the blacksmith, who was now leaving the room. "See, the *ignis fatuus* has disappeared from my cell, the sun will soon shine."

"Trenck, be reasonable," said Von Bruckhäusen, in an entreating tone. "Do not increase your misery—do not force me to be more cruel to you. Promise to make no more attempts to escape, and you shall not be punished for your treacherous plot!"

Trenck laughed aloud. "You promise not to punish me. How could you accomplish it? Has not your cruelty bound me in irons, in chains, whose invention can only be attributed to the devil? Do I not live in the deepest, most forlorn cell in the fortress? Is not my nourishment bread and water? Do you not condemn me to pass my days in idleness, my nights in fearful darkness? What more could you do to me?—how could you punish any new attempt to escape? No, no, sir commandant; as soon as that door has closed on you, the mole will commence to burrow, and some day, in spite of all your care, he will escape."

"That is your last word!" cried Von Bruckhäusen, infuriated. "You will not promise to abandon these idle attempts at escape? You will not name your accomplices?"

"No! and again no!"

"Well, then, farewell. You shall remember this hour, and I promise you, you shall regret it."

Throwing a fearful look of malignant wrath at Trenck, who was leaning against his pallet, laughing at his rage, the commandant left the prison. The iron door closed slowly; the firm, even tread of the disappearing soldiers was audible, then all was quiet.

A death-like stillness reigned in the prisoner's cell; no sound of life disturbed the fearful quiet. Trenck shuddered; a feeling of inexpressible woe, of inconsolable despair came over him. He could now yield to it, no one was present to hear his misery and wretch-

edness. He need not now suppress the sighs and groans that had almost choked him; he could give the tears, welling to his eyes like burning fire, full vent; he could cool his feverish brow upon the stone floor, in the agony of his soul. As a man trembles at the thought of death, Trenck trembled at the thought of life. He knew not how long he had sighed, and wept, and groaned. For him there was no time, no hour, no night—it was all merged into one fearful day. But still he experienced some hours of pleasure and joy. These were the hours of sleep, the hours of dreams. Happier than many a king, than many powerful rulers and rich nobles upon their silken couches, was this prisoner upon his hard pallet. He could sleep—his spirit, busy during the day in forming plans for his escape, needed and found the rest of sleep; his body needed the refreshment and received it.

Yes, he could sleep. Men were hard and cruel to him, but God had not deserted him, for at night He sent an angel to his cell who consoled and refreshed him. It was the angel of slumber—when night came, after all his sorrow, his agony, his despair endured during the day, the consoling angel came and took his seat by the wretched prisoner. This night he kissed his eyes, he laid his soft wings on the prisoner's wounded heart, he whispered glorious dreams of the future into his ear. A beautiful smile, seldom seen when he was awake, now rested upon his lips.

Keep quiet, ye guards, without there—keep quiet, the prisoner sleeps; the sleep of man is sacred, and more sacred than all else is the sleep of the unfortunate. Do not disturb him—pass the door stealthily. Be still, be still! the prisoner sleeps—reverence his rest.

This stillness was now broken by a loud cry.

"Trenck, Trenck!" cried a thundering voice—"Trenck, are you asleep?"

He woke from his pleasant dreams and rose in terror from his bed. He thought he had heard the trumpets of the judgment-day, and listened eagerly for the renewing of the sound.

And again the cry resounded through his cell. "Trenck, are you there?"

With a wild fear he raised his hand to his burning brow

"Am I mad?" murmured he; "I hear a voice in my brain calling me; a voice—"

The bolts were pushed back, and Commandant Von Bruckhäusen, accompanied by a soldier, with a burning torch, appeared on the threshold.

"Why did you not answer, Trenck?" said he.

"Answer—answer what?"

"The sentinel's call. As you swore to me you would make new

attempts to escape, I was compelled to make arrangements to prevent your succeeding. The guards at your door are commanded to call you every quarter of an hour during the night. If you do not answer at once, they will enter your cell to convince themselves of your presence. Accommodate yourself to this, Trenck. We shall now see if you are able to free yourself with your nails and teeth!"

He left the room, the door was closed. It was night once more in the prisoner's cell—but he did not sleep. He sat upon his pallet and asked himself if what had passed was true, or if it was not some wild and fearful dream.

"No, no, it cannot be true; they could not rob me of my last and only pleasure—my sleep! soft, balmy sleep!"

But listen. There is a voice again. "Trenck, Trenck, are you there?"

He answered by a fearful yell, and sprang from his bed, trembling with terror. It was no dream!

"It is true!—they will let me sleep no more. Cowardly thieves! may God curse as I curse you. May He have no pity with you, who have none with me! Ah, you cruel men, you increase my misery a thousandfold. You murder my sleep. God's curse upon you!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE KING AND THE GERMAN SCHOLAR.

It was the winter of 1760. Germany, unhappy Germany, bleeding from a thousand wounds, was for a few months freed from the scourge of war; she could breathe again, and gather new strength for new contests. Stern winter with its ice and snow had alone given peace to the people for a short time. The rulers thought of and willed nothing but war; and the winter's rest was only a time of preparation for new battles. The allies had never yet succeeded in vanquishing the little King of Prussia. Notwithstanding the disappointments and adversities crowded upon him—though good fortune and success seemed forever to have abandoned him—Frederick stood firm and undaunted, and his courage and his confidence augmented with the dangers which surrounded him.

But his condition appeared so sad, so desperate, that even the heroic Prince Henry despaired. The king had in some degree repaired the disasters of Künersdorf and Mayen by his great victories at Leignitz and Torgau; but so mournful, so menacing was his position on every side, that even the victories which had driven his

enemies from Saxony, and at least assured him his winter quarters, brought him no other advantages, and did not lessen the dangers which threatened him. His enemies stood round about him—they burned with rage and thirst to destroy utterly that king who was always ready to tear from them their newly-won laurels. Only by his complete destruction could they hope to quench the glowing enthusiasm which the people of all Europe expressed by shouts and exultation.

The Russians had their winter quarters for the first time in Pomerania. The Austrians lay in Silesia and Bohemia. The newly-supplied French army, and the army of the States, were on the Rhine. While the enemies of Frederick remained thus faithful to each other in their war against him, he had just lost his only ally.

King George II. of England was dead, and the weak George III. yielded wholly to the imperious will of his mother and to that of Lord Bute. He broke off his league with Prussia, and refused to pay the subsidy.

Thus Prussia stood alone—without money, without soldiers, without friends—surrounded by powerful and eager enemies—alone and seemingly hopeless, with so many vindictive adversaries.

All this made Prince Henry not only unhappy, but dispirited—palsied his courage, and made him wish to leave the army and take refuge in some vast solitude where he could mourn over the misfortunes of his distracted country. Accordingly he wrote to the king and asked for his discharge.

The king replied:

"It is not difficult, my brother, in bright and prosperous times, to find men willing to serve the state. Those only are good citizens who stand undaunted at the post of danger in times of great crises and disaster. The true calling of a man consists in this: that he should intrepidly carry out the most difficult and dangerous enterprises. The more difficulty, the more danger—the more bright honor and undying fame. I cannot, therefore, believe that you are in earnest in asking for your discharge. It is unquestionable that neither you nor I can feel certain of a happy issue to the circumstances which now surround us. But when we have done all which lies in our power, our consciences and public opinion will do us justice. We contend for our fatherland and for honor. We must make the impossible possible, in order to succeed. The number of our enemies does not terrify me. The greater their number, the more glorious will be our fame when we have conquered them."*

Prince Henry, ashamed of his despondency, gave to this letter of his brother the answer of a hero. He marched against the Russians,

* Preuss, "History of Frederick the Great," vol. ii., p. 246.

drove them from Silesia, and raised the siege of Breslau, around which the Austrians under Loudon were encamped. Tauentzein, with fearless energy and with but three thousand Prussians, had fortified himself in Breslau against this powerful enemy. So in the very beginning of the winter the capital of Silesia had been retaken. By Torgau the king had fought and won his twelfth battle for the possession of Silesia—yes, fought and won from his powerful and irreconcilable enemies. And all this had been in vain, and almost without results. The prospect of peace seemed far distant, and the hope of happiness for Frederick even as remote.

But now winter was upon them. This stern angel of peace had sheathed the sword, and for the time ended the war.

While the pious Maria Theresa and her court ladies made it the *mode* to prepare lint in their splendid saloons during the winter for the wounded soldiers—while the Russian General Soltikow took up his winter quarters at Posen, and gave sumptuous feasts and banquets—Frederick withdrew to Leipsic, in which city philosophy and learning were at that time most flourishing. The Leipsigers indeed boasted that they had given an asylum to poetry and art.

The warrior-hero was now changed for a few happy months into the philosopher, the poet, and the scholar. Frederick's brow, contracted by anxiety and care, was now smooth; his eye took again its wonted fire—a smile was on his lip, and the hand which had so long brandished the sword, gladly resumed the pen. He who had so long uttered only words of command and calls to battle, now bowed over his flute and drew from it the tenderest and most melting melodies. The evening concerts were resumed. The musical friends and comrades of the king had been summoned from Berlin; and that nothing might be wanting to make his happiness complete, he had called his best-beloved friend, the Marquis d'Argens, to his side.

D'Argens had much to tell of the siege of Berlin by the Russians —of the firm defence of the burghers—of their patriotism and their courage. Frederick's eyes glistened with emotion, and in the fulness of his thankful heart he promised to stand by his faithful Berliners to the end. But when D'Argens told of the desolation which the Russians had wrought amongst the treasures of art in Charlottenburg, the brow of the king grew dark, and with profound indignation he said:

"Ah, the Russians are barbarians, who labor only for the downfall of humanity.* If we do not succeed in conquering them, and destroying their rude, despotic sovereignty, they will again and ever disquiet the whole of Europe. In the mean time, however,"

*The king's own words.—Archenholtz, vol. i., p. 282.

said Frederick, "the vandalism of the Russians shall not destroy our beautiful winter rest. If they have torn my paintings and crushed my statues, we must collect new art-treasures. Gotzkowsky has told me that in Italy, that inexhaustible mine of art, there are still many glorious pictures of the great old masters; he shall procure them for me, and I will make haste to finish this war in order to enjoy my new paintings, and to rest in my beautiful Sans-Souci. Ah, marquis, let us speak no longer of it, in this room at least, let us forget the war. It has whitened my hair, and made an old man of me before my time. My back is bent, and my face is wrinkled as the flounce on a woman's dress. All this has the war brought upon me. But my heart and my inclinations are unchanged, and I think I dare now allow them a little satisfaction and indulgence. Come, marquis, I have a new poem from Voltaire, sent to me a few days since. We will see if he can find grace before your stern tribunal. I have also some new sins to confess. That is to say, I have some poems composed in the hours of rest during my campaigns. You are my literary father confessor, and we will see if you can give me absolution."

But the king did not dedicate the entire winter to music, and French poems, and gay, cheerful conversation with his friends. A part of this happy time was consecrated to the earnest study of the ancients. For the first time he turned his attention to German literature, and felt an interest in the efforts of German philosophers and poets.

Quintus Icilius, the learned companion of Frederick, had often assured him that the scholarship, the wit, the poetry of Germany, found at this time their best representatives in Leipsic, that he at length became curious to see these great men, of whom Quintus Icilius asserted that they far surpassed the French in scholarship, and in wit and intellect might take their places unchallenged side by side with the French.

The king listened to this assurance with rather a contemptuous smile. He directed Icilius, however, to present to him some of the Leipsic scholars and authors.

"I will present to your majesty the most renowned scholar and philologist of Leipsic, Professor Gottsched, and the celebrated author, Gellert," said Icilius, with great animation. "Which of the two will your majesty receive first?"

"Bring me first the scholar and philologist," said the king, laughing. "Perhaps the man has already discovered in this barbarous Dutch tongue a few soft notes and turns, and if so, I am curious to hear them. Go, then, and bring me Professor Gottsched. I have often heard of him, and I know that Voltaire dedicated an ode to

him. In the mean time I will read a little in my Lucretius and prepare my soul for the interview with this great Dutchman."

Icilius hastened off to summon the renowned professor to the king.

Gottsched, to whom, at that time, all Germany rendered homage, and who possessed all the pride and arrogance of a German scholar, thought it most natural that the king should wish to know him, and accepted the invitation with a gracious smile. In the complete, heart-felt conviction of his own glory, in the rigid, pedantic array of a magnificent, long-tailed wig, the German professor appeared before the king. His majesty received him in his short, simple, unostentatious manner, and smiled significantly at the pompous manner of the renowned man. They spoke at first of the progress of German philosophy, and the king listened with grave attention to the learned deductions of the professor, but he thought to himself that Gottsched understood but little how to make his knowledge palatable; he was probably a learned, but most certainly a very uninteresting man.

The conversation was carried on with more vivacity when they spoke of poetry and history, and the king entered upon this theme with warm interest.

"In the history of Germany, I believe there is still much concealed," said Frederick; "I am convinced that many important documents are yet hidden away in the cloisters."

Gottsched looked up at him proudly. "Pardon, sire," said he, in his formal, pedantic way. "I believe those can be only unimportant documents. To my view, at least, there is no moment of German history concealed—all is clear, and I can give information on every point!"

The king bowed his head with a mocking smile. "You are a great scholar, sir; I dare not boast of any preëminence. I only know the history of the German States written by Père Barré."

"He has written a German history as well as a foreigner could write it," said Gottsched. "For this purpose he made use of a Latin work, written by Struve, in Jena. He translated this book—nothing more. Had Barré understood German, his history would have been better; he would have had surer sources of information at his command."

"But Barré was of Alsace, and understood German," said Frederick, eagerly. "But you, who are a scholar, an author, and a grammarian, tell me, if any thing can be made of the German language?"

"Well, I think we have already made many beautiful things of it," said Gottsched, in the full consciousness of his own fame.

"But you have not been able to give it any melody, or any grace," said Frederick. "The German language is a succession of barbarous sounds; there is no music in it. Every tone is rough and harsh, and its many discords make it useless for poetry or eloquence. For instance, in German you call a rival 'Nebenbuhler,' what a fatal, disgusting sound—'Buhler!'" *

"Ah, your majesty," said Gottsched, impatiently, "that is also a sound in the French tongue. You should know this, for no one understands better, more energetically than yourself, how to circumvent the 'boules!'"

Frederick laughed; and this gay rejoinder of the learned professor reconciled him somewhat to his puffed-up and haughty self-conceit. "It is true," said he, "this time you are right; but you must admit that, in general, the French language is softer and more melodious!"

"I cannot admit it," said Gottsched, fiercely. "I assert that German is more musical. How harsh, how detestable sounds, for instance, the French '*amour;*' how soft and tender—yes, I may say, how characteristic—sounds the word '*liebe!*'"

"Aha!" said the king, "you are certainly most happily married, or you would not be so enthusiastic about German '*liebe,*' which I admit is a very different thing from French '*amour.*' I am, however, convinced that the French language has many advantages over the German. For instance, in the French one word may often suffice to convey many different meanings, while for this purpose several German words must be combined."

"That is true. There your majesty is right," said Gottsched, thoughtfully. "The French language has this advantage. But this shall be no longer so—we will change it! Yes, yes—we will reform it altogether!"

Frederick looked astonished and highly diverted. This assumption of the learned scholar, "to change all that," impressed him through its immensity.† "Bring that about sir," said the king, gayly. "Wave your field-marshal's staff and give to the German language that which it has never possessed, grace, significance, and facility; then breathe upon it the capability to express soft passion and tender feeling, and you will do for the language what Julius Cæsar did for the people. You will be a conqueror, and will cultivate and polish barbarians!"

Gottsched did not perceive the mockery which lay in these words of the king, but received them smilingly as agreeable flattery.

* The king's own words.—Archenholtz, vol. ii., p. 272.

† Many years afterward the king repeated this declaration of Gottsched to the Duchess of Gotha, "We will change all that," and was highly amused.

"The German language is well fitted to express tender emotions. I pledge myself to translate any French poem faithfully, and at the same time melodiously," said he.

"I will put you to the proof, at once," said the king, opening a book which lay upon the table. "Look! These are the Odes of Rousseau, and we will take the first one which accident presents. Listen to this:

"'Sous un plus heureux auspice,
La Déesse des amours,
Veut qu'un nouveau sacrifice,
Lui consacre vos beaux jours;
Déjà le bûcher s'allume.
L'autel brille, l'encens fume,
La victime s'embellit,
L'amour même la consume,
Le mystère s'accomplit.'*

"Do you believe it is possible to translate this beauiful stanza into German?" said the king.

"If your majesty allows me, I will translate it at once," said he. "Give me a piece of paper and a pencil."

"Take them," said Frederick. "We will divert ourselves by a little rivalry in song, while you translate the verses of the French poet into German. I will sing to the praise of the German author in French rhyme. Let us not disturb each other."

Frederick stepped to the window and wrote off hastily a few verses, then waited till he saw that Gottsched had also ceased to write. "I am ready, sir," said the king.

"And I also," said the scholar, solemnly. "Listen, your majesty, and be pleased to take the book and compare as I read;" then with a loud nasal voice he read his translation:

"'Mit ungleich glücklicherm Geschicke,
Gebeut die Königin zarter Pein,
Hin, Deine schönen Augenblicke,
Zum Opfer noch einmal zu weihn,
Den Holzstoss liebt man aufzugeben,
Der Altar glänzt, des Weihrauchs Düfte
Durchdringen schon die weiten Lüfte,
Das Opfer wird gedoppelt schön,
Durch Amors Glut ist es verflogen,
Und das Geheimniss wird vollzogen.'

"Now, your majesty," said Gottsched, "do you not find that the German language is capable of repeating the French verses promptly and concisely?"

"I am astonished that you have been able to translate this beauti-

*See note, page 572.

ful poem. I am sorry I am too old to learn German. I regret that in my youth I had neither the courage nor the instruction necessary. I would certainly have turned many of my leisure hours to the translation of German authors, rather than to Roman and French writers; but the past cannot be recalled, and I must be content! If I can never hope to become a German writer, it will at least be granted me to sing the praises of the regenerator of the German language in French verse. I have sought to do so now—listen!"

The king read aloud a few verses to the enraptured professor. The immoderate praise enchanted him, and, in the assurance of his pride and conceit, he did not remark the fine irony concealed in them. With a raised voice, and a graceful, bantering smile, the king concluded:

> "C'est à toi Cygne des Saxons,
> D'arracher ce secret à la nature avare;
> D'adoucir dans tes chants d'une langue barbare,
> Les durs et détestables sons!" *

"Ah! your majesty," cried Gottsched, forgetting his indignation over the *langue barbare*, in his rapture at the praise he had received, "you are kind and cruel at the same moment. You cast reproach upon our poor language, and, at the same time, give me right royal praise. *Cygne des Saxons*—that is an epithet which does honor to the royal giver, and to the happy receiver. For a king and a hero, there can be no higher fame than to appreciate and reverence men of letters. The sons of Apollo and the Muses, the scholars, the artists and authors, have no more exalted object than to attain the acknowledgment and consideration of the king and the hero. Sire, I make you a most profound and grateful reverence. You have composed a masterly little poem, and when the *Cygne des Saxons* shall sing his swanlike song, it will be in honor of the great Frederick, the Cæsar of his time."

"Now, my dear Quintus," said the king, after Gottsched had withdrawn, "are you content with your great scholar?"

"Sire," said he, "I must sorrowfully confess that the great Gottsched has covered his head with a little too much of the dust of learning; he is too much of the pedant."

"He is a puffed-up, conceited fool," said the king, impatiently; "and you can never convince me that he is a great genius. Great men are modest; they have an exalted aim ever before them, and are never satisfied with themselves; but men like this Gottsched place themselves upon an altar, and fall down and worship. This is their only reward, and they will never do any thing truly great."

"But Gottsched has really great and imperishable merit," said

* Œuvres Posthumes, vol. vii., p. 216. See note, p. 572.

Quintus, eagerly. "He has done much for the language, much for culture, and for science. All Germany honors him, and, if the incense offered him has turned his head, we must forgive him, because of the great service he has rendered."

"I can never believe that he is a great man, or a poet. He had the audacity to speak of the golden era of literature which bloomed in the time of my grandfather, Frederick I., in Germany, and he was so foolhardy as to mention some German scribblers of that time, whose barbarous names no one knows, as the equals of Racine, and Corneille, and even of Virgil. Repeat to me, once more, the names of those departed geniuses, that I may know the rivals of the great writers of the day!"

"He spoke of Bessen and Neukirch," said Quintus; "I must confess it savors of audacity to compare these men with Racine and Corneille; he did this, perhaps, to excite the interest of your majesty, as it is well known that the great Frederick, to whom all Germany renders homage, attributes all that is good and honorable to the German, but has a poor opinion of his intellect, his learning, and his wit."

The king was about to reply, when a servant entered and gave him a letter from the professor, Gottsched.

"I find, Quintus," said the king, "that my brother in Apollo does me the honor to treat me with confidence. If I was at all disposed to be arrogant, I might finally imagine myself to be his equal. Let us see with what sort of dedication the *Cygne des Saxons* has honored us." He opened the letter, and while reading, his countenance cleared, and he burst out into a loud, joyous laugh. "Well, you must read this poem, and tell me if it is pure German and true poetry." The king, assuming the attitude of a great tragedian, stepped forward with a nasal voice, and exactly in the pompous manner of Gottsched, he read the poem aloud. "Be pleased to remark," said the king, with assumed solemnity, "that Gottsched announces himself as the Pindar of Germany, and he will have the goodness to commend me in his rhymes to after-centuries. And now, tell me, Quintus, if this is German poetry? Is your innermost soul inspired by these exalted lines?"

"Sire," said Quintus Icilius, "I abandon my renowned scholar, and freely confess that your majesty judged him correctly; he is an insufferable fool and simpleton."

"Not so; but he is a German scholar," said the king, pathetically; "one of the great pillars which support the weight of the great temple of German science and poetry."

"Sire, I offer up my German scholar; I lay him upon the altar of your just irony. You may tear him to pieces; he is yours. But I

pray you, therefore, to be gracious, sire, and promise me to receive my poet kindly."

"I promise," said the king: "I wish also to become acquainted with this model.

"Promise me, however, one thing. If the German poet resembles the German scholar, you will make me no reproaches if I turn away from all such commodities in future?"

CHAPTER XII.

GELLERT.

GELLERT was just returning from the university, where, in the large hall, he had recommenced his lectures on morality. A large audience had assembled, who had given the most undivided attention to their beloved master. As he left the rostrum the assembly, entirely contrary to their usual custom, burst forth in loud applause, and all pressed forward to welcome the beloved teacher on his return to his academic duties after his severe illness.

These proofs of love had touched the sensitive German poet so deeply in his present nervous and suffering condition, that he reached his lodging deathly pale and with trembling knees: utterly exhausted, he threw himself into his arm-chair, the only article of luxury in his simple study.

The old man, who sat near the window in this study, was busily engaged in reading, and paid him no attention; although Gellert coughed several times, he did not appear to remark his presence, and continued to read.

"Conrad," said Gellert, at length, in a friendly, pleading tone.

"Professor," answered the old man, as he looked up unwillingly from his book.

"Conrad, it seems to me that you might stand up when I enter; not, perhaps, so much out of respect for your master, as because he is delicate and weak, and needs your assistance."

"Professor," said the old man, with composure, "I only intended finishing the chapter which I have just commenced, and then I should have risen. You came a little too soon. It was your own fault if I was compelled to read after you came."

Gellert smiled. "What book were you reading so earnestly, my old friend?"

"The 'Swedish Countess,' professor. You know it is my favorite book. I am reading it now for the twelfth time, and I still think

it the most beautiful and touching, as well as the most sensible book I ever read. It is entirely beyond my comprehension, professor, how you made it, and how you could have recollected all these charming histories. Who related all that to you?"

"No one related it to me, it came from my own head and heart," said Gellert, pleasantly. "But no, that is a very presumptuous thought; it did not come from myself, but from the great spirit, who occasionally sends a ray of his Godlike genius to quicken the hearts and imaginations of poets."

"I do not understand you, professor," said Conrad, impatiently. "Why do you not talk like the book—I understand all that the 'Swedish Countess' says, for she speaks like other people. She is an altogether sensible and lovely woman, and I have thought sometimes, professor—"

Old Conrad hesitated and looked embarrassed.

"Well, Conrad, what have you thought?"

"I have thought sometimes, sir, perhaps it would be best for you to marry the 'Swedish Countess.'"

Gellert started slightly, and a light flush mounted to his brow.

"I marry!" he exclaimed; "Heaven protect me from fastening such a yoke upon myself, or putting my happiness in the power of any creature so fickle, vain, capricious, haughty, obstinate, and heartless as a woman. Conrad, where did you get this wild idea? you know that I hate women; no, not hate, but fear them, as the lamb fears the wolf."

"Oh, sir," cried Conrad, angrily, "was your mother not a woman?"

"Yes," said Gellert, softly, after a pause—"yes, she was a woman, a whole-hearted, noble woman. She was the golden star of my childhood, the saintly ideal of the youth, as she is now in heaven the guardian angel of the man; there is no woman like her, Conrad. She was the impersonation of love, of self-sacrifice, of goodness, and of devotion."

"You are right," said Conrad, softly, "she was a true woman; the entire village loved and honored her for her benevolence and piety; when she died, it seemed as though we had all lost a mother."

"When she died," said Gellert, his voice trembling with emotion, "my happiness and youth died with her; and when the first handful of earth fell upon her coffin I felt as if my heart-strings broke, and that feeling has never left me."

"You loved your mother too deeply, professor," said Conrad; "that is the reason you are determined not to love and marry some other woman."

"Why, man, do not talk to me again of marrying," cried Gellert. "What has that fatal word to do in my study?"

"A great deal, sir; only look how miserable every thing is here; not even neat and comfortable, as it should certainly be in the room of so learned and celebrated a professor. Only think of the change that would be made by a bright young wife. You must marry, professor, and the lady must be rich. This state of things cannot continue; you must take a wife, for you cannot live on your celebrity."

"No, Conrad, but on my salary," said Gellert. "I receive two hundred and fifty thalers from my professorship; only think, two hundred and fifty thalers! That is a great deal for a German poet, Conrad; I should consider myself most fortunate. It is sufficient for my necessities, and will certainly keep me from want."

"It would be sufficient, professor, if we were not so extravagant. I am an old man, and you may very well listen to a word from me. I served your father for fifteen years—in fact, you inherited me from him. I have the right to speak. If it goes so far, I will hunger and thirst with you, but it makes me angry that we should hunger and thirst when there is no necessity. Have you dined to-day?"

"No, Conrad," said Gellert, looking embarrassed. "I had, accidentally, no money with me as I came out of the academy, and you know that I do not like to go to the eating-house without paying immediately."

"Accidentally you had no money? You had probably left it at home."

"Yes, Conrad, I had left it at home."

"No, sir; you gave your last thaler to the student who came this morning and told you of his necessities, and complained so bitterly that he had eaten nothing warm for three days. You gave your money to him, and that was not right, for now we have nothing ourselves."

"Yes, Conard, it was right, it was my duty; he hungered and I was full; he was poor and in want, and I had money, and sat in my warm, comfortable room; it was quite right for me to help him."

"Yes, you say so always, sir, and our money all goes to the devil," muttered Conrad. "With what shall we satisfy ourselves to-day?"

"Well," said Gellert, after a pause, "we will drink some coffee, and eat some bread and butter. Coffee is an excellent beverage, and peculiarly acceptable to poets, for it enlivens the fancy."

"And leaves the stomach empty," said Conrad.

"We have bread and butter to satisfy that. Ah, Conrad, I assure

you we would often have been very happy in my father's parsonage if we had had coffee and bread and butter for our dinner. We were thirteen children, besides my father and mother, and my father's salary was not more than two hundred thalers. Conrad, he had less than I, and he had to provide for thirteen children."

"As if you had not provided for yourself since you were eleven years old—as if I had not seen you copying late into the night to earn money, at an age when other children scarcely know what money is, and know still less of work."

"But when I carried the money which I had earned to my mother, she kissed me so tenderly, and called me her brave, noble son—that was a greater reward than all the money in the world. And when the next Christmas came, and we were all thirteen so happy, and each one received a plate filled with nuts and apples and little presents, I received a shining new coat. It was the first time I had ever had a coat of new cloth. My mother had bought the material with the money I had earned. She had kept it all, and now my writings had changed into a beautiful coat, which I wore with pride and delight. No coat is so comfortable as one we have earned ourselves. The self-earned coat is the royal mantle of the poor."

"But we need not be poor," scolded Conrad. "It is that which makes me angry. If we were careful, we could live comfortably and free from care on two hundred and fifty thalers. But every thing is given away, and every thing is done for others, until we have nothing left for ourselves."

"We have never gone hungry to bed, Conrad, and we need not hunger. To-day we have coffee, and bread and butter, and to-morrow I will receive something from my publishers from the fourth edition of my fables. It is not much, it will be about twenty thalers, but we will be able to live a long time on that. Be content, Conrad, and go now into the kitchen and prepare the coffee; I am really rather hungry. Well, Conrad, you still appear discontented. Have you another grievance in reserve?"

"Yes, professor, I have another. The beadle tells me that the university have offered you a still higher position than the one you now hold. Is it true?"

"Yes, Conrad, it is true. They wished me to become a regular professor."

"And you declined?"

"I declined. I would have been obliged to be present at all the conferences. I would have had more trouble, and if I had had the misfortune to become rector I would have been lost indeed, for the rector represents the university; and if any royal personages should arrive it is he who must receive them and welcome them in the

name of the university. No, no; protect me from such honors. I do not desire intercourse with great men. I prefer my present position and small salary, and the liberty of sitting quietly in my own study, to a regular professorship and a higher salary, and being forced to dance attendance in the antechambers of great people. Then, in addition to that, I am delicate, and that alone would prevent me from attending as many lectures as the government requires from a regular high-salaried professor. You must never receive money for work that you have not done and cannot do. Now, Conrad, those are my reasons for declining this situation for the second time. I think you will be contented now, and prepare me an excellent cup of coffee."

"It is a shame, nevertheless," said Conrad, "that they should say you are not a regular professor. But that is because you have no wife. If the Swedish countess were here, every thing would be changed; your study would be nicely arranged, and you would be so neatly dressed, that no one would dare to say you were not a regular professor."

"But that is no offence, Conrad," cried Gellert, laughing. "In the sense in which you understand it, I am more now than if I had accepted this other position, for I am now called an extraordinary professor."

"Well, I am glad that they know that you are an extraordinary professor," said Conrad, somewhat appeased. "Now I will go to the kitchen and make the coffee. That reminds me that I have a letter for you which was left by a servant."

He took a letter from the table, and handed it to his master. While he was breaking the seal, Conrad approached the door slowly and hesitatingly, evidently curious to hear the contents of the letter. He had not reached the door, when Gellert recalled him.

"Conrad," said Gellert, with a trembling voice, "hear what this letter contains."

"Well, I am really curious," said Conrad, smiling.

Gellert took the letter and commenced reading:

"My dear and honored professor, will you allow one of your—"

Here he hesitated, and his face flushed deeply. "No," he said, softly; "I cannot read that; it is too great, too undeserved praise of myself. Read it yourself."

"Nonsense!" said Conrad, taking the letter; "the professor is as bashful as a young girl. To read one's praise, is no shame. Now listen: 'My dear and honored professor, will you allow one of your pupils to seek a favor from you? I am rich! God has enriched you with the rarest gifts of mind and heart, but He has not bestowed outward wealth upon you. Your salary is not large, but your heart

is so great and noble, that you give the little you possess to the poor and suffering, and care for others while you yourself need care. Allow me, my much-loved master, something of that same happiness which you enjoy. Grant me the pleasure of offering you (who divide your bread with the poor, and your last thaler with the suffering) a small addition to your salary, and begging you to use it so long as God leaves you upon earth, to be the delight of your scholars, and the pride of Germany. The banker Farenthal has orders to pay to you quarterly the sum of two hundred thalers; you will to-morrow receive the first instalment.

"'YOUR GRATEFUL AND ADMIRING PUPIL.'

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Conrad, waving the paper aloft. "Now we are rich, we can live comfortably, without care. Oh, I will take care of you, and you must drink a glass of wine every day, in order to become strong, and I will bring your dinner from the best eating-house, that you may enjoy your meal in peace and quiet in your own room."

"Gently, gently, Conrad!" said Gellert, smiling. "In your delight over the money, you forget the noble giver. Who can it be? Who among my pupils is so rich and so delicate, as to bestow so generously, and in such a manner?"

"It is some one who does not wish us to know his name, professor," cried Conrad, gayly; "and we will not break our hearts over it. But now, sir, we will not content ourselves with bread and coffee; we are rich, and we need not live so poorly! I will go to the eating-house and bring you a nice broiled capon, and some preserved fruit, and a glass of wine."

"It is true," said Gellert, well pleased; "a capon would strengthen me, and a glass of wine; but no, Conrad, we will have the coffee; we have no money to pay for such a meal."

"Well, we can borrow it! To-morrow you will receive the first quarterly payment of your pension, and then I will pay for your dinner."

"No, Conrad, no!" said Gellert, firmly. "You should never eat what you cannot pay for immediately. Go to the kitchen and make the coffee." Conrad was on the point of going discontentedly to obey the command of his master, when a loud and hasty ring was heard at the outer door of the professor's modest lodging.

"Perhaps the banker has sent the money to-day," cried Conrad, as he hurried off, whilst Gellert again took the letter and examined the handwriting.

But Conrad returned, looking very important.

"The Prussian major, Quintus Icilius, wishes to speak to the professor, in the name of the king," he said, solemnly.

"In the name of the king!" cried Gellert; "what does the great warrior-hero want with poor Gellert?"

"That I will tell you," replied a voice from the door; and as Gellert turned, he saw before him the tall figure of a Prussian officer. "Pardon me for having entered without your permission. Your servant left the door open, and I thought—"

"You thought, I hope, that Gellert would be happy to receive an officer from the king, especially one who bears so celebrated a name," said Gellert, courteously, as he signed to Conrad to leave the room—a sign that Conrad obeyed most unwillingly, and with the firm determination to listen outside the door.

"In the first place, allow me to say how happy I am to make the acquaintance of so learned and celebrated a man as Professor Gellert," said Quintus, bowing deeply; "then I must announce the cause of my appearance. His majesty the King of Prussia wishes to know you, and he has sent me to conduct you to him at once."

"At once?" cried Gellert. "But, sir, you must see that I am weak and ill. The king will not care to see a sick man who cannot talk."

Quintus glanced sympathizingly at the poor professor, and said:

"It is true, you do not look well, and I cannot force you to go with me to-day; but allow me to make one remark: if you think to escape the interview altogether, you are mistaken. The king desires to speak with you, and it is my duty to bring you to him. If you cannot go to-day, I must return to-morrow; if you are then still unwell, the day after; and so on every day, until you accompany me."

"But this is frightful!" cried Gellert, anxiously.

Quintus shrugged his shoulders. "You must decide, sir," he said; "I give you an hour. At four o'clock I will return and ask if you will go to-day, or another time."

"Yes; do that, major," said Gellert, breathing more freely. "In the mean time, I will take my dinner, and then see how it is with my courage. Conrad! Conrad!" exclaimed Gellert, as Quintus Icilius left him, and his servant entered the room. "Conrad, did you hear the bad tidings? I must go to the King of Prussia."

"I heard," said Conrad, "and I do not think it bad tidings, but a great honor. The king sent for Professor Gottsched a few days since, and conversed with him a long time. Since then, his entire household act as if Gottsched were the Almighty Himself, and as if they were all, at least, archangels. Therefore, I am glad that the king has shown you the same honor, and that he desires to know you."

"Honor!" murmured Gellert. "This great lord wishes to see the

learned Germans for once, as others visit a menagerie, and look at the monkeys, and amuse themselves with their wonderful tricks. It is the merest curiosity which leads such men to desire to behold the tricks and pranks of a professor. They know nothing of our minds; it satisfies them to look at us. Conrad, I will not go; I will be ill to-day and every other day. We will see if this modern Icilius will not yield!"

And the usually gentle and yielding poet paced the room in angry excitement, his eyes flashing, and his face deeply flushed.

"I will not—I will not go."

"You must go, professor," said Conrad, placing himself immediately in front of his master, and looking at him half-imploringly, half-threateningly—"you must go; you will give your old Conrad the pleasure of being able to say to the impudent servants of Herr Gottsched that my master has also been to the King of Prussia. You will not do me the injury of making me serve a master who has not been to see the king, while Herr Gottsched has been?"

"But, Conrad," said Gellert, complainingly, "what good will it have done me to have declined the position of regular professor, that I might be in no danger of becoming rector, and being obliged to see kings and princes?"

"It will show the world," said Conrad, "that a poet need not be a regular professor in order to be called into the society of kings and princes. You must go—the king expects you; and if you do not go, you will appear as the Austrians do, afraid of the King of Prussia."

"That is true," said Gellert, whose excitement had somewhat subsided; "it will look as though I were afraid."

"And so distinguished a man should fear nothing," said Conrad, "not even a king."

"Well, so be it," said Gellert, smiling, "I will go to the king to-day, but I must first eat something; if I went fasting to the king I might faint, and that would disgrace you forever, Conrad."

"I will run and bring the coffee," said the delighted old servant.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE POET AND THE KING.

GELLERT had scarcely finished his frugal meal, and arranged his toilet a little, when Major Quintus arrived and asked the poet if he were still too unwell to accompany him to the king.

"I am still indisposed," said Gellert, with a sad smile, "but my

indisposition is of a kind that leaves me neither to-day, to-morrow, nor any day; it is therefore better for me to gratify the king's commands at once. I am ready to accompany you, sir; let us depart."

He took his three-cornered hat, which Conrad handed him with a delightful smirk, and followed the major to the splendid house where the king had taken his quarters for the winter.

"Allow me a favor, sir," said Quintus, as they mounted the steps; "the king is prejudiced against German poets and philosophers, and it would be of the greatest advantage to the literary and political world of Germany for these prejudices to disappear, and for the great Frederick to give to Germany the sympathy and encouragement which until now he has lavished upon the French and Italians. Think of this, sir, and endeavor to win the king by your obliging and pleasing manner."

"Oh, major!" sighed Gellert, "I do not understand the art of pleasing the great ones of this world. I cannot utter words of praise and flattery; my heart and manners are simple and not showy."

"Exactly, this is beautiful and attractive," said the major, smiling: "the king cannot endure pretension or conceited wisdom. Be simply yourself imagine that you are in your own study, conversing frankly and freely with a highly-honored friend, to whom politeness and attention are due."

The king, with his flute in hand, was walking up and down the room, when the door opened, and Major Quintus entered with Gellert.

Frederick immediately laid his flute aside, and advanced to meet the poet with a gracious smile. Gellert's gentle and intellectual countenance was composed, and his eyes were not cast down or confused by the piercing glance of the king.

"Is this Professor Gellert?" said the king, with a slight salutation.

"Yes, your majesty," said Gellert, bowing profoundly.

"The English ambassador has spoken well of you," said the king; "he has read many of your works."

"That proves him to be a thoughtful and benevolent gentleman, who hopes something from German writers," said Gellert, significantly.

Frederick smiled, and perhaps to excite him still more, said quickly:

"Tell me, how does it happen, Gellert, that we have so few celebrated writers?"

"Your majesty sees before you now a German poet whom even

the French have translated, and who call him the German La Fontaine."

"That is great praise, great praise," said the king, whose large eyes fastened themselves more attentively upon Gellert's modest, expressive face. "You are then called the German La Fontaine? Have you ever read La Fontaine?"

"Yes, sire, but I did not imitate him," said Gellert, ingenuously, "I am an original."

The king nodded gayly; Gellert's quick frankness pleased him.

"Good," he said, "you are an excellent poet; but why do you stand alone?"

Gellert shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"Your majesty is prejudiced against the Germans."

"No, I cannot admit that," said the king, quickly.

"At least against German writers," replied Gellert.

"Yes, that is true; I cannot deny that. Why have we no good writers in Germany?"

"We have them, sire," said Gellert, with noble pride. "We boast a Maskow, a Kramer—who has set Bossuet aside."

"How!" cried the king, astonished; "Bossuet? Ah, sir, how is it possible for a German to set Bossuet aside?"

"Kramer has done so, and with great success," said Gellert, smiling. "One of your majesty's most learned professors has said that Kramer has the eloquence of Bossuet, and more profound historical accuracy."

The king appeared really astonished, and walked several times thoughtfully up and down his room.

"Was my learned professor capable of deciding that question?"

"The world believes so, sire."

"Why does no one translate Tacitus?"

"Tacitus is difficult," said Gellert, smiling; "there are some bad French translations of this author."

"You are right," said the king.

"Altogether," continued Gellert, "there are a variety of reasons why the Germans have not become distinguished in letters. When art and science bloomed in Greece, the Romans were becoming renowned in war. Perhaps the Germans have sought their fame on the battle-field; perhaps they had no Augustus or Louis XIV. who favored and encouraged the historians and poets of Germany."

This was a daring and broad allusion, but Frederick received it smilingly.

"You have had an Augustus, perhaps two, in Saxony," he said.

"And we have made a good commencement in Saxony. We should have an Augustus for all of Germany."

"What!" cried the king, quickly, and with sparkling eyes, "you desire an Augustus for Germany?"

"Not exactly," said Gellert, "but I wish that every German sovereign would encourage genius and letters in his country. Genius needs encouragement; and when it does not find it in its own land, and from its native princes, it cannot retain the great and joyous power of creation."

The king did not answer, but walked thoughtfully up and down; from time to time he glanced quickly and searchingly at Gellert, who was standing opposite to him.

"Have you ever been out of Saxony?" said the king, at last.

"Yes, sire, I was once in Berlin."

"You should go again," said the king—then added, as if he regretted having shown the German poet so much sympathy, "at all events, you should travel."

"To do so, your majesty, I require health and money."

"Are you sick?" asked the king, in a gentle, sympathizing voice. "What is your malady? Perhaps too much learning."

Gellert smiled. "As your majesty thinks so, it may bear that interpretation. In my mouth it would have sounded too bold."

"I have had this malady myself," said the king, laughing; "I will cure you. You must take exercise—ride out every day."

"Ah, sire, this cure might easily produce a new disease for me," said Gellert, terrified; "if the horse should be healthier than I, I could not ride it, and if it were as weak as myself, we would not be able to stir from the spot."

"Then you must drive," said the king, laughing.

"I have not the money, sire."

"That is true," said the king. "All German writers need money, and we have fallen upon evil times."

"Yes, truly, sire, evil times; but it lies in your majesty's hands to change all this, if you would give peace to Germany"

"How can I?" cried the king, violently. "Have you not heard that there are three against me?"

"I care more for ancient than modern history," said Gellert, who did not desire to follow the king upon the slippery field of politics.

"You, then, are accurately acquainted with the ancients?" said the king. "Which, then, do you think the greatest and most renowned of that epoch—Homer or Virgil?"

"Homer, I think, merits the preference, because he is original."

"But Virgil is more polished and refined."

Gellert shook his head violently. Now that the old writers were being discussed, the German sage overcame his timidity.

"We are entirely too widely separated from Virgil to be able to

judge of his language and style. I trust to Quintilian, who gives Homer the preference."

"But we must not be slaves to the judgment of the ancients," said the king, aroused.

"I am not, sire; I only adopt their views when distance prevents my judging for myself."

"You are certainly right in this," said the king, kindly. "Altogether you appear to be a wise and reasonable man. I understand that you have greatly improved the German language."

"Ah, yes, sire, but unfortunately it has been in vain."

"Why is this?" said the king. "You all wish me to interest myself in German, but it is such a barbarous language, that I often have quires of writing sent me, of which I do not understand a word. Why is it not otherwise?"

"If your majesty cannot reform this, I certainly cannot," said Gellert, smiling; "I can only advise, but you can command."

"But your poems are not written in this stiff, pompous German. Do you not know one of your fables by heart?"

"I doubt it, sire, my memory is very treacherous."

"Well, try and think of one. In the mean while I will walk backward and forward a little. Well, have you thought of one?"

"Yes, your majesty," said Gellert, after a brief silence, "I believe I remember one."

"Let us hear it," said the king; and, seating himself upon the *fauteuil*, he gazed fixedly at Gellert, who, standing in the middle of the room, his clear glance turned toward the king, now began his recitation.

"THE PAINTER.

"A painter, Athens his abode,
Who painted less for love of gain
Than crowns of laurel to obtain,
Mars' portrait to a connoisseur once showed,
And his opinion of it sought.
The judge spoke freely what he thought,
'Twas wholly not unto his taste, he said,
And that, to please a practised eye,
Far less of art should be displayed.
The painter failed not to reply,
And though the critic blamed with skill,
Was of the same opinion still.

"Then in the room a coxcomb came,
To scan the work with praise or blame,
He with a glance its worth descried;
'Ye gods! A masterpiece!' he cried.
'Ah, what a foot! what skilled details,
E'en to the painting of the nails!

A living Mars is here revealed,
What skill—what art in light and shade—
Both in the helmet and the shield,
And in the armor are displayed!'

"The painter blushed with humbled pride,
Looked at the judge with woful mien,
'Too well am I convinced,' he cried,
'Unjust to me thou hast not been.'
The coxcomb scarce had disappeared,
When he his god of battle smeared."

"And the moral," cried the king, with vivacity, as Gellert ceased for a moment.

"Here is the moral, sire:

"If what you write offends the critic's rules,
It is an evil sign, no doubt;
But when 'tis lauded to the skies by fools,
'Tis time, indeed, to blot it out."

"That is beautiful—very beautiful; you have something gallant in your person. I understand every thing you say. I received a translation of 'Iphigenia' by Gottsched, and Quintus read it to me. I had the French with me, and I did not understand a word. He also brought me a poem by Pietsh, but I threw it aside."

"I threw it aside, also," said Gellert, smiling.

The king smiled pleasantly. "Should I remain here, you must come often and bring your fables to read to me."

Gellert's brow clouded slightly. "I do not know whether I am a good reader," he said, in some embarrassment. "I have such a sing-song, monotonous voice."

"Yes, like the Silesians," said the king, "but it sounds pleasantly. You must read your fables yourself. No one else can give the proper emphasis. You must visit me soon again."

"Do not forget the king's request," said Quintus Icilius, as he escorted Gellert to the door. "Visit him soon, and be assured you shall never come in vain. I will take care that the king receives you always."

Gellert looked up smilingly at the major. "My dear sir, in many respects I am quite an old-fashioned man; for example, I have read a great deal in the Old Scriptures for instruction. I have read, 'Put not your trust in princes.' These words seem wise to me, and you must allow me to interpret them literally, and act accordingly."

Gellert withdrew, and hastened home. The major returned to the king, admiring, almost envying, Gellert's modest, independent, and beautiful character.

"Quintus," said the king, "I thank you sincerely for my new

German acquaintance. The poet is better than the philosopher. Gellert is the wisest and cleverest poet of his time—a much worthier man than Gottsched, with all his pompous knowledge. Gellert's fame will outlive his. He is perhaps the only German who will not be forgotten. He attempts but little, and succeeds well."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE KING AND THE VILLAGE MAGISTRATE.

In the little village of Voiseilvitz, near the Silesian frontier, there was a great stir and excitement. The quartermaster of the army had just arrived and announced the king's approach. He then went on to the next village to seek quarters for the army. After their many sufferings and wants, the weary soldiers were much in need of rest and refreshment. They had passed many, many miserable weeks, during which the most patient had become disheartened. The king alone had retained his courage, his presence of mind, his activity and energy. He had borne, without complaint, every want and privation. Surrounded by powerful enemies, his great and clear mind had contrived the intrenchments which encompassed his camp, and which had filled his enemies with wonder. Neither Daun, Loudon, Butterlin, nor Ternitschow, dared attack the camp that had suddenly become a strong fortress. They gazed in wild amazement at their daring, invincible enemy, whom they had so often thought to ruin, and who had continually with his lion strength broken the nets they had laid for him. Not daring to attack him with their cannon and their swords, the allies relied upon another much more fearful weapon—hunger! It was impossible for the king, surrounded as he was by enemies, to obtain food for his troops and fodder for the horses. But Frederick did not cease to hope · he turned night into day and day into night; thus he was prepared for any movement. During the day he could observe all that passed in the enemy's camp; a few slight guards were placed in the intrenchments, while the rest of the army slept. But at night they did not sleep; as soon as evening came, all the tents were taken down, the cannon were planted, and behind them the regiments were placed in line of battle. Thus they stood listening in breathless silence for any sound or movement that would announce the enemy's approach. All were ready and waiting for them, determined to die rather than surrender.

In spite of privations, want of rest and food, the army remained hopeful, for their king shared their danger, wants, and sleepless

nights. He was always with them—he hungered and worked with them. If the soldiers were deprived of their rations, they had at least the consolation of knowing that the king suffered likewise. This strengthened and encouraged them.

The Prussians had fortitude to bear their sufferings, but their enemy had not the patience to wait. Butterlin, the Russian commander, tired of watching Frederick, withdrew to Poland; and Loudon, not feeling secure now in his isolated position, retired also.

After four weeks of agony and want, the Prussian army could leave their encampment and seek both food and rest. They were to recruit themselves in the villages in the vicinity of Strehlen; the king and his staff were to rest at Voiseilvitz. The house of the magistrate had been chosen as the only dwelling-place fit for these noble guests. The magistrate, elated at the honor, was marching from room to room, scolding, imploring his servants to have every thing clean and orderly.

"Remember," said he, "a king is to inhabit this house; he will be enraged if there is the least spot or stain upon the floors or windows, for of course he wears beautiful garments, covered with pearls and diamonds, and embroidered in gold and silver. How fearful, then, would it be were he to ruin them at my house! He would be infuriated, for money is scarce now, and I dare say as hard for him to get as for us."

At last, thanks to threats and entreaties, the house was in readiness for the king. The front room was beautifully clean, and white blinds were at the windows. The deal table was covered with a snow-white damask cloth. Beside a window in which were placed some bright plants, an old leathern arm-chair was standing, which the magistrate intended for a throne. The walls were covered with some portraits of the royal family of Prussia. Around a wretched engraving of Frederick a wreath of *immortelles* and *forget-me-nots* was woven. In a corner stood a large bed with clean white curtains in readiness for the king. When every thing was arranged, with a last proud look at his handsome dwelling, the magistrate hurried to the front door, waiting anxiously for his guest. His heart beat high with expectation—his whole being was in commotion—he was to see a king for the first time, and he asked himself how this king would look. "How glorious his eyes must be! I think he must radiate like the sun. It must almost blind the eyes to dwell upon his splendor."

Lost in these thoughts, he did not observe a cavalcade consisting of three riders passing through the street. The foremost one was enveloped in an old faded blue mantle, his large three-cornered hat hung far over his brow, shading his eyes and his thin, pale counte-

nance. His heavy army boots were in need both of brushing and mending. His two companions formed an agreeable contrast to him. They wore the rich, glittering uniforms of Prussian staff officers. All about them was neat and elegant, and pleased the magistrate right well. The cavalcade now stopped at his house, and, to the amazement of the villagers, the two spruce young officers sprang to the ground and hastened to assist the man in the blue mantle to alight from his horse. But he waved them aside, and springing lightly from the saddle, advanced to the house door. The magistrate blocked up the way, and looking haughtily at the stranger, said:

"You undoubtedly belong to the servants of the king, and think, therefore, to enter my house. But that cannot be. The king alone will dwell with me. If you are what I suppose you to be, you must go next door. My neighbor may have quarters for you."

The stranger smiled. Fixing his large, brilliant eyes sternly upon the magistrate, he caused him to draw back almost in terror, feeling as if the sun had really blinded him.

"I am not one of the king's servants," said the stranger, gayly, "but I am invited to dine with him."

"Then it is all right," said the magistrate, "you can enter. But you must first go into that little side-room and brush your shoes before the king sees you, for he would surely be enraged to find you in dusty boots."

The king laughed gayly, and entered the house. "I will go to the king's chamber at once. I think he will forgive my shoes." He beckoned to the two officers and entered his room, the door of which he left open.

The magistrate took no more notice of him, but remained outside, looking eagerly for the king.

Frederick still did not come to illuminate the street with his splendor. In his stead came generals and officers, with gold epaulets and bright stars sparkling on their coats, and entered the king's chamber, without a word to the magistrate.

"They are all waiting for the king," murmured he, "but I shall see him first. How splendid and magnificent are all these officers! How grand, how glorious then must the king be, who is far nobler than they! He does not come; I will enter and pass the time in looking at all these splendidly-dressed soldiers." He stepped lightly to the door, and peered in. He started; a low cry of terror escaped him, as he looked at the scene before him.

The generals—the officers dressed in the gold and silver embroidered uniforms—stood around the room with bared heads; in their midst stood the stranger with the dusty boots. He alone had his hat on. He alone bore neither epaulets nor stars; he was clad in

simple uniform, without a single ornament, and still, wonderful to say, it now seemed to the magistrate that he was more noble, more splendid-looking than all the others. He was the smallest amongst them, but seemed much taller. They stood with bowed heads before him; he alone was raised proudly to his full height. There was something grand and glorious in his countenance; and when his large, luminous eyes fell upon the magistrate, he endeavored in vain to slip away—he was rooted to the spot as if by magnetism.

"Will you not stay with us until the king comes?" said Frederick, laughing.

The magistrate answered the smile with a broad grin. "I see, sir," said he, "that you are laughing at me. You know that you yourself are the king."

Frederick nodded an assent, and then turned to Prince Anhalt von Dessau.

"You see, sir, how precarious a thing is the glory and magnificence of a king. This man took me for a servant; his dull eyes could not perceive my innate glory."

"Your majesty justly calls this man's eyes dull," said the prince, laughing.

Frederick looked at him kindly, and then began a low, earnest conversation with his generals, who listened attentively to his every word.

The magistrate still stood at the door. It seemed to him that he had never seen any thing so splendid-looking as this man with the muddy boots, the simple coat, and torn, unwieldy hat, whose countenance beamed with beauty, whose eyes glittered like stars.

"That, then, is really the king?" said he to one of the royal servants—"the King of Prussia, who for five years has been fighting with the empress for us?"

"Yes, it is him."

"From to-day on I am a Prussian at heart," continued the magistrate; "yes, and a good and true one. The King of Prussia dresses badly, that is true, but I suppose his object is to lighten the taxes." Passing his coat-sleeve across his misty eyes, he hastened to the kitchen to investigate dinner.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

Some days had passed since the king entered Voiseilvitz. He dwelt in the house of the magistrate, and the generals were quartered in the huts of the village. The regiments were in the neighboring

hamlets. The king lived quietly in his house, wholly given up to anxiety and discontent. He ate alone in his room, spoke to no one, or if he did, said only a few grave words. All jesting was vanished from his lips; he was never seen to smile, never heard to play the flute. The grief which oppressed his heart was too profound to be confided to the soft and melting tones of his flute. Even that cherished companion could now give him no consolation. Fearful, horrible intelligence had followed him from the encampment at Strehlen. It had poisoned these days of long-denied and necessary rest, and shrouded the gloomy future with yet darker presentiments of evil.

Schweidnitz, the strong fortress, the key of Silesia, which had been so long and with such mighty effort defended, had fallen!—had yielded to the Austrians—and Frederick had thus lost the most important acquisition of the last year, and thus his possession of Silesia was again made doubtful. He looked sadly back upon all the precious blood which had been shed to no purpose—upon all the great and hardly-won battles, won in vain. He looked forward with an aching heart to the years of blood and battle which must follow. Frederick longed for rest and peace—he was weary of bloodshed and of war. Like an alluring, radiant picture of paradise, the image of his beloved Sans-Souci passed from time to time before his soul. He dreamed of his quiet library and his beautiful picture-gallery. And yet his courage was unconquered—and he preferred the torture of these wretched days—he preferred death itself to the unfavorable and humiliating peace which his proud enemies, made presumptuous by their last successes, dared to offer him. They stood opposed to him in monstrous superiority, but Frederick remained unshaken. With a smaller army and fewer allies Alexander demolished Persia. "But happily," he said to himself, "there was no Alexander to lead his enemies to victory."

Frederick did not despair, and yet he did not believe in the possibility of triumph. He preferred an honorable death to a dishonorable peace. He would rather fall amidst the proud ruins of Prussia, made great by his hand, than return with her to their former petty insignificance. They offered him peace, but a peace which compelled him to return the lands he had conquered, and to pay to his victorious enemies the costs of the war.

The king did not regard these mortifying propositions as worthy of consideration, and he commanded his ambassador, whom he had sent to Augsburg to treat with the enemy, to return immediately. "It is true," he said to his confidant, Le Catt, "all Europe is combined against me—all the great powers have resolved upon my destruction. And England, the only friend I did possess in Europe, has now abandoned me."

"But one has remained faithful."

"'Among the faithless, faithful only he' Among the innumerable false, unmoved, unshaken, unseduced, unterrified, that is my sword. If the exalted empresses are not my friends, the greater honor to my good sword which has never failed me, and which shall go down with me into the dark grave. If in Europe I have neither friends nor allies, I may find both in other parts of the world. Asia may send me the troops which Europe denies. If Russia is my enemy, who knows but for this reason Turkey may become my ally? And who knows but an alliance with the so-called unbelievers would be of more value to Prussia than a league with the so-called believing Russians? They call themselves Christians, but their weapons are lies, intrigues, deceit, and treachery. The Moslem, however, is an honorable man and a brave soldier. If he calls his God Allah, and his Christ Mohammed, God may call him to account. I have nothing to do with it. What has faith to do with the kings of this world? Besides, I believe the Turks and Tartars are better Christians than the Russians."

"Your majesty is really, then, thinking of an alliance with the Turks and Tartars?" said Le Catt.

"I am thinking of it so earnestly," said the king, eagerly, "that day and night I think of nothing else. I have spared no cost, no gold, no labor, to bring it about. Once I had almost succeeded, and the Sublime Porte was inclined to this league; and my ambassador, Rexin, was, with the consent of the Grand Vizier Mustapha, and indeed by his advice, disguised and sent secretly to Constantinople. The negotiations were almost completed, when the Russian and French ambassadors discovered my plans, and by bribery, lies, and intrigues of every base sort, succeeded in interfering. Mustapha broke his promise, and his only answer to me was—'that the Sublime Porte must wait for happier and more propitious days to confirm her friendship and good understanding with the King of Prussia.' This was the will of God the Almighty. This propitious year has been a long time coming, but I hope it is now at hand, and this longed-for alliance will at length be concluded. The last dispatches from my ambassador in Constantinople seem favorable. The wise and energetic Grand Vizier Raghile, the first self-reliant and enterprising Turkish statesman, has promised Rexin to bring this matter before the sultan, and I am daily expecting a courier who will bring me a decisive and perhaps favorable answer from Tartary." *

Le Catt gazed with admiration upon the noble, excited countenance of the king. "Oh, sire," said he, deeply moved, "pardon, that in the fulness of my heart, overcome with joy and rapture, I

* Kammer, "History of the Porte," vol. viii., p. 190.

dare for once to give expression in words to my love and my admiration. It is a glorious spectacle to see the proud oak in the midst of the wild tempest firm and unmoved, not even bowing its proud head to the raging elements, offering a bold but calm defiance. But it is a still more exalted spectacle to see a man with a brave heart and flashing eye defy disaster and death; alone, in the consciousness of his own strength, meeting Fate as an adversary and gazing upon it eye to eye unterrified. Misfortune is like the lion of the desert. If a man with steady eye and firm step advances to meet him, he ceases to roar and lies down humbly at his feet; he recognizes and quails before man made in the likeness of God. You, my king, now offer this spectacle to the astonished world. Can you wonder that I, who am ever near you, are filled with devotion and adoration, and must at last give utterance to my emotion? I have seen your majesty on the bloody battle-field, and in the full consciousness of victory, but never have I seen the laurels which crown your brow so radiant as in these days of your misfortune and defeat. Never was the King of Prussia so great a hero, so glorious a conqueror, as during these last weeks of destitution and gloom. You have hungered with the hungry, you have frozen with the freezing; you have passed the long, weary nights upon your cannon or upon the hard, cold earth. You have divided your last drop of wine with the poor soldiers. You did this, sire; I was in your tent and witnessed it—I alone. You sat at your dinner—a piece of bread and one glass of Hungarian wine, the last in your possession. An officer entered with his report. You asked him if he had eaten. He said yes, but his pale, thin face contradicted his words. You, sire, broke off the half of your bread, you drank the half of your wine, then gave the rest to the officer, saying in an almost apologetic tone, 'It is all that I have.' Sire, on that day I did what since my youth I have not done—I wept like a child, and my every glance upon your noble face was a prayer."

"Enthusiast," said the king, giving his hand to Le Catt with a kindly smile, "is the world so corrupt that so natural an act should excite surprise, and appear great and exalted? Are you astonished at that which is simply human? But look! There is a courier! He stops before the door of my peasant-palace. Quick, quick! Le Catt; let me know the news he brings."

Le Catt hastened off, and returned at once with the dispatches.

Frederick took them with impatient haste, and while he read, his grave face lightened, and a happy, hopeful smile played once more upon his lips. "Ah, Le Catt," said he, "I was a good prophet, and my hopes are about to be fulfilled. Europe is against me, but Asia is my ally. The barbarous Russians are my enemies, but the

honest Turks and Tartars are my friends. This dispatch is from my ambassador Rexin. He is coming, accompanied by an ambassador of Tartary, and may be here in a few hours."

"Where will your majesty receive him?" said Le Catt.

The king looked around smilingly at the little room, with the rude walls and dirty floor.

"I will receive him here!" said he; "here, in my royal palace of Voiseilvitz. I am forced to believe that a right royal king would, by his presence, transform the lowliest hut into a palace, and the most ordinary chair into a throne. The eyes of the ambassador may, however, be as dull as those of the worthy possessor of my present palace. It may be that he will not recognize me as the visible representative of God—as king by the grace of God. We must therefore come to his assistance, and show ourselves in all the dazzling glitter of royalty. We must improvise a throne, and, it appears to me, that leathern arm-chair, which certainly belonged to a grandfather, is well suited to the occasion. It will be a worthy representation of my throne, which was my grandfather's throne; he erected it, and I inherited it from him. Shove it, then, into the middle of the room, and fasten some of the Russian flags, which we took at Zorndorf, on the wall behind it; spread my tent-carpet on the floor, and my throne saloon is ready. Quick, Le Catt, make your preparations; call the servants, and show them what they have to do. In the mean time, I will make my toilet; I must not appear before the worthy ambassador in such unworthy guise." The king rang hastily, and his valet, Deesen, entered. "Deesen," said he, gayly, "we will imagine ourselves to be again in Sans-Souci, and about to hold a great court. I must do then, what I have not done for a long time—make *grande toilette.* I will wear my general's uniform, and adorn myself with the order of the Black Eagle. I will have my hair frizzed, and screw up an imposing cue. Well, Deesen, why do you gaze at me so wildly?"

"Sire, the general's coat is here, but—"

"Well, but what?" cried the king, impatiently.

"But the breeches! the breeches!" stammered Deesen, turning pale; "they are torn; and those your majesty now wears, are your last and only ones."

"Well, then," said the king, laughing, "I will continue to wear my last and only breeches; I will put on my general's coat, *voilà tout.*"

"That is wholly impossible," cried Deesen, wringing his hands. "If your majesty proposes to hold a great court, you cannot possibly wear these bréeches!"

"Why not? why not?" said the king, fiercely.

"Sire," murmured Deesen, "sire, that has happened to them which happened to your majesty at Torgau."

"That is to say—" said the king, questioningly.

"That is to say, they are wounded."

Frederick looked surprised, and following the glance of his valet, he found his eyes fixed upon his knees.

"You are right, Deesen," said he, laughing; "that disaster has befallen my breeches which befell me at Torgau: they are wounded, and need a surgeon."

"Your majesty must therefore graciously postpone your great court till to-morrow. Perhaps I may find a tailor in one of the neighboring villages; he will work during the night, and early to-morrow every thing will be in order."

"It must be done to-day—done immediately," cried the king. "In a few hours the injury must be healed, and my apparel fully restored to health."

"But, sire," whispered Deesen, "how can that be possible? Your majesty has but one pair, and you must take them off, in order that they may be mended."

"Well, I will take them off," said the king; "go and seek the tailor. I will undress and go to bed till this important operation is performed. Go at once!"

While the king was undressing, he heard Deesen's stentorian voice, calling out lustily through the streets—"A tailor! a tailor! is there a tailor amongst the soldiers?"

The king was scarcely covered up in bed before Deesen entered, with a joyous face.

"Sire, I have found a soldier who can do the work; he is not a tailor, but he swears he can sew and patch, and he undertakes to dress the wounds."

"And yet, it is said that a higher power rules the world," murmured the king, when he was again alone; "accident—accident decides all questions. If there had been no tailor amongst the soldiers, the King of Prussia could not have received the ambassador of Tartary to-day, and the negotiations might have been broken off."

At this moment the door opened, and Le Catt entered, followed by a servant with the Russian flags and the carpet. When he saw the king in bed, he started back, and asked anxiously "if his majesty had been taken suddenly unwell?"

"No," said Frederick, "I am only making my toilet."

"Your toilet, sire?"

"Yes, Le Catt, did you see a soldier at the door?"

"Yes, sire."

"What was he doing?"

"He seemed to be sewing."

"He is sewing, and he is to-day my first gentleman of the bedchamber; he is dressing me. Ah! in the presence of this humble patcher, I remember that a wise man said, 'A king is but a man to his *valet de chambre.*' But do not allow my presence to prevent you from building my throne; I will rest here comfortably, and look on."

While the king lay in bed waiting, the soldier who had undertaken the job, sat on a bench before the door. He bent his head zealously over his work, and did not once look up to his comrade who stood near him, leaning against a large oak, gazing rigidly and unweariedly at him. But in this steady and indefatigable glance, there seemed to be a strange, attractive power, which the soldier could not resist. He raised his head involuntarily for a moment, and the sweet and noble face of Charles Henry Buschman was seen.

"Fritz Kober," said he, "why do you gaze at me so, and why do you follow me?"

"Because I have been so accustomed to be where you are!" said Fritz Kober, quietly. "When I heard Deesen call for a tailor, and you answered, 'Here! here!' I stepped out of my tent and followed you; nothing more! But you would also know why I look at you? Well, while it pleases me to see you sewing, it brings strange and pleasant thoughts to my mind."

"What sort of strange and pleasant thoughts, Fritz?" said Charles Henry, bowing down again earnestly over his work.

"I thought," said Fritz Kober, in a trembling voice, "that if ever I should take a wife, she must look exactly as you do, Charles Henry; she must have the same neat little hands, and be expert with the needle as you are. Then I thought further, that in the whole world there was no man so good and brave, so gentle and intelligent as you. Then I considered what would become of me when the war was at an end, and you should desert me and go back to your village. Then I resolved to follow you through the whole world, and not to cease my prayers and entreaties till you promised to come into my hut, and take all that was mine—under the condition that you would keep me always with you—at least as your servant—and never spurn me or cast me off. Then, I thought further, that if you said *no*—if you refused to come into my house, I would wander far away in despair, and, in the anguish of my heart I would become a bad and contemptible man. Without you, Charles Henry, there is no joy or peace in this world for me; you are my good angel! Charles Henry Buschman, do you wish me to be a dissolute drunkard?"

"How can I wish that, Fritz Kober?" whispered Charles Henry.

"But you could never be a bad man; you have the best and noblest heart in the world! No man dare injure or abuse you! You give to those who ask of you, you help those who suffer, and you stand by those who are in difficulty! Then you are a complete, true man, and know how to maintain your own dignity on every occasion. All who approach you are compelled to respect you, and no one will ever dare to cast a reproach on Fritz Kober. You are, at the same time, a hero, a good man, and an innocent child, and my heart rejoices in you."

"What is good in me, I owe to you," said Fritz Kober. "Before I knew you, I was a simple blockhead, and lived on stupidly from day to day, thinking of nothing. Since I knew you, I have learned to open my eyes, and to reflect. But all this will be changed if you desert me, Charles Henry, and I see that you will do so; yes, you will abandon me. For three weeks past you have taken no notice of me. You would not go into my tent with me at Bunzelwitz, but camped out alone. Here, in the village, you would not come into my hut, but quartered with an old peasant woman. So I followed you to-day, to ask you, once for all, if you have the heart to leave me—to spurn me from you? Look at me, Charles Henry! look at me and tell me if you will make a pitiful and unhappy man of me?"

Charles Henry looked up from his work, and gazed at the pale, agitated face of his comrade; and as he did so, tears gushed from his eyes.

"God forbid, Fritz Kober, that I should make you unhappy! I would rather shed my heart's blood to make you happy."

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Fritz Kober. "If this is so, listen to me and answer me, Charles Henry Buschman, will you be my wife?"

A glowing blush suffused Charles Henry's face; he bowed down over his work and sewed on in monstrous haste.

Fritz Kober came nearer and bowed so low that he was almost kneeling.

"Charles Henry Buschman, will you be my wife?"

Charles Henry did not answer; tears and sobs choked his voice, and trembling with emotion he laid his head on Fritz Kober's shoulder.

"Does that mean yes?" said Fritz, breathlessly.

"Yes," whispered she, softly.

And now Fritz uttered a wild shout, and threw his arms around the soldier's neck and kissed him heartily.

"God be thanked that it is over," said he; "God be thanked that I did not deceive myself—that you are truly a girl. When you were last sick, and the surgeon bled you, I was suspicious. I said to myself, 'That is not the arm of a man.' I went out, but in the

evening you were praying, and you did not know that I was in the tent, and you said, 'You dear parents in heaven, pity your poor daughter.' I could have shouted with rapture and delight, but I held my peace. I wished to wait and see if you would be good to me."

"But the expression of your eyes was so changed," whispered Charles Henry; "I was obliged to turn away when their glance fell upon me. I felt that my secret was discovered, and therefore I avoided being with you."

"Officer Buschman," cried Deesen, in a commanding voice from the house, "is your work finished?"

"Immediately; I have but a few stitches to do," cried Charles Henry. "Be silent," said he to Fritz, "and let me sew."

But Fritz was not silent; he crouched near officer Buschman, and whispered many and strange things in his ear.

Charles Henry sewed on zealously, blushed often, and replied in low, embarrassed words.

At last the work was completed, and the knees of the great Frederick's breeches were worthily mended with divers patches.

"I will carry them myself to the king, as I have a favor to ask him," said Fritz Kober. "Come with me, Charles Henry; you must hear what the king says."

He took Charles Henry's hand and advanced to the door, but Deesen stood there, and forbade him to enter; he ordered Fritz to give him the breeches.

"No," said Fritz Kober, resolutely, "we have a request to make of the king, and he once gave us permission to come directly to him when we had a favor to ask."

He pushed Deesen aside and entered the room with Charles Henry.

The king sat in his bed reading, and was so absorbed that he did not see them enter. But Fritz stepped up boldly to the bed and laid the breeches upon the chair.

"Did you mend them, my son?" said the king.

"No, your majesty, Charles Buschman mended them, but I came along to say something to your majesty. You remember, no doubt, what you said when we returned from the enemy's camp near Künersdorf, after the battle, when Charles Henry related so beautifully all that we had seen and heard. You said, 'You are both officers from this day, and if you ever need my assistance call upon me freely.'"

"And you wish to do so now?" said the king.

"Yes, your majesty, I have something to ask."

"Well, what is it?"

Fritz Kober drew up grandly and ceremoniously.

"I ask your majesty to allow me to marry officer Charles Henry Buschman—to marry him to-day!"

"Marry him!" said the king, amazed; "is, then, officer Buschman—"

"A woman, your majesty!" interrupted Fritz Kober, with joyful impatience. "He is a woman; his name is Anna Sophia Detzloff, from Brünen."

Frederick's sharp, piercing eye rested for a moment questioningly upon Charles Henry's face; then nodding his head smilingly several times, he said:

"Your bride is a spruce lad and a brave officer, and knows how to blush in his soldier's uniform. Officer Charles Henry Buschman, will you be the wife of officer Fritz Kober?"

"I will, if your majesty consents," whispered Charles Henry.

"Well, go to the field-preacher, and be married—I give my consent. And now go, I must dress.

"At last," said the king to Le Catt, "fortune will be again favorable to me. Signs and wonders are taking place, as they did with Charles VII. of France. When he was in the most dire necessity, surrounded by his enemies, the Lord sent the Maid of Orleans to save him. To me, also, has the Lord now sent a Joan d'Arc, a maid of Brünen. With her help I will overcome all my enemies."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE AMBASSADOR AND THE KHAN OF TARTARY.

THE preparations were completed; the room of the king had become, by means of his inventive genius, a magnificenct throne saloon. The great arm-chair, draped with rich hangings, looked almost imposing; the dirty floor was concealed by a costly Turkish carpet. The door which led into the entry had been removed, and the opening hung with banners. The entry itself had been changed by means of carpets, banners, and standards into a tasteful antechamber.

The king wore his general's uniform, and the chain of the order of the Black Eagle, and the generals and staff officers stood near him in their glittering dresses. The room of the sheriff had indeed become a royal apartment.

And now an imposing train approached this improvised palace. First appeared two riders, whose gold-embroidered mantles fell below their feet and concealed the well-shaped bodies of the small

Arabian horses on which they were mounted, only displaying their slender necks, with their flowing manes and their graceful legs. It was evident from their dark complexions and flashing eyes that these men were foreigners, the sons of the South. On each appeared the diamond-headed hilt of a sword, glittering amid the folds of the costly Turkish shawls which encircled their slender waists; and at the side of each hung the jewelled sheath of a Damascus blade, which was held in the right hand, and presented in salutation. These Turkish warriors were followed by two others, scarcely less richly dressed, and behind them rode four men, in long black robes, with eyes closed, each bearing in his right hand a book bound in gold and velvet, which he pressed prayerfully to his breast; a golden pen was worn in their girdles in place of a weapon, and on the fez an artistically arranged and jewelled peacock's feather. Now followed two other riders; but these were not alike, as the others had been, but bore the most remarkable and striking contrast to one another. One of them was dressed in the latest French style; he wore a blue, silver-embroidered velvet coat, with small-clothes of the same material, which met his white silk stockings at the knee, and were fastened by a band with a diamond clasp. His shoes were also ornamented with diamond buckles and red heels. He wore a three-cornered hat, with a white feather, which was placed lightly and gracefully upon his stiffly-curled, well-powdered peruke. Splendid lace covered his breast, and broad lace cuffs fell over his white gloved hands. It was a perfect ball dress, such as was worn at that time at court by all ambassadors who were not military, in their ceremonious audiences with the sovereign.

Near this man, dressed so gracefully and airily, was another cavalier who presented a great contrast to him. As the one seemed dressed for a summer day, so the other appeared prepared for the coldest weather; the one was ready for the ball-room, and the other for the steppes of Siberia. The long, thin figure of the latter was concealed by a fur mantle, made of the skin of the white Lapland wolf, and lined and trimmed with a darker fur; around his waist was bound a costly gold-embroidered shawl, from which hung a small golden cup, and a richly ornamented razor. At his side, instead of the Turkish sabre, a bag, richly worked with gold and pearls, was suspended by golden chains. He wore a fez, on the front of which was embroidered a small golden cup.

Behind these two men came a troop of Turkish, Tartar, and European servants, all in livery; and these were followed by a golden chariot, with closely-drawn blinds, the interior being impenetrable to the most curious gaze. Four Tartars in long white fur mantles rode on either side of the chariot, with drawn swords.

The chariot was followed by a most remarkable crowd, consisting of Prussian soldiers from every regiment, and in every variety of uniform, of peasants and their wives, of old men and children, who were all struck dumb with astonishment and admiration at the sight of this strange cavalcade which now paused before the king's house.

The guards saluted, and the generals and staff officers advanced silently and bowed profoundly to the two cavaliers, who were such a singular contrast to one another, and who were evidently the important persons of the cavalcade. They swung themselves lightly from their saddles, and returned the polite greetings of the generals; the one in fluent German, the other in equally flowing words, but in a language which no one understood, and to which the only answer was a few murmured words, a smile, and hieroglyphic hand-pressures.

The first was the Baron von Rexin, the ambassador of the king to the Grand Sultan and the Khan of Tartary, who had been so fortunate as to become the minster plenipotentiary of the King of Prussia under the title given him by the king of Baron von Rexin, after having been the servant of a merchant in Breslau, called Hubsch. The second was the great and noble Mustapha Aga, the ambassador of Krimgirai, the Khan of Tartary. He was the favorite and confidant of his master, and was sent by him to bear his greetings and good wishes to the King of Prussia.

As soon as they had dismounted, a page of the king approached and invited them to enter the house, where the king was waiting to give them audience. Baron von Rexin, who during his residence in Turkey had learned the Turkish language, informed the ambassador. A smile appeared upon Mustapha Aga's thin, pale face, and he turned to the four men in black robes, who wore the golden pens in their belts, and signed to them to follow him, and then taking the arm of Baron von Rexin, they both entered the house, followed by the four historians and interpreters; the generals and staff officers of the king then arranging themselves on either side of the throne, according to their rank.

The king received the embassy sitting upon his throne. His eye rested smilingly upon Mustapha Aga, who had just bent to the earth before his throne, and as he arose signed to one of the four interpreters to approach. The interpreter opened the costly book, which he held in his hand, and handed the ambassador a large document, covered with seals, which Mustapha Aga pressed respectfully to his lips, and then kneeling, presented it respectfully to the king.

"Mustapha Aga, the ambassador of the high and mighty Khan of Tartary, Krimgirai, has the unutterable honor to present his

credentials to the King of Prussia," said the interpreter, in the purest and most fluent French.

The king broke the seal, and looked hurriedly over the document. "Mustapha Aga," he said, "you are most welcome; and I greet your master, the hero Krimgirai, whom I am proud to call my friend, in you."

After the interpreter repeated the words of the king, Mustapha Aga threw himself upon his knees before the throne, and spoke rapidly for a few moments.

"Mustapha Aga, the ambassador of the great Khan," said the interpreter, "entreats your majesty to allow him to show you the highest proof of his respect, to greet you in the manner in which he alone, in great and beautiful Tartary, is permitted to greet the Khan."

"I grant his request," said the king.

Mustapha immediately opened the pouch which hung at his side, and took from it a crystal flask, from which he poured a fluid into the cup, and a delightful perfume immediately pervaded the room. After putting a small quantity of white powder into the cup, he proceeded to stir the contents with a brush, of which the handle was ornamented with three diamonds of immense size. The fluid now arose into a sparkling milk-white foam.

The king looked curiously at him at first, and then turned to his ambassador. "What does this mean?" he asked in German, probably because he did not wish to be understood by the interpreter.

"Sire," said Rexin, smiling, "that means that the noble Mustapha Aga wishes to show you the greatest honor in his power, he wishes to shave you."

"To shave me!" exclaimed the king. "Who and what is the noble Mustapha Aga?"

"Sire, he is one of the greatest dignitaries of Tartary; he is the barber of the Khan!"

The king could scarcely restrain a smile at this explanation. "Well," he said, "it is not a bad idea to make a diplomat and ambassador of a barber. The gentlemen of the diplomatic corps are given to shaving in politics and frequently put soap in the eyes of the world."

Mustapha Aga now approached the king with solemn steps, and bending forward, he thrust his forefinger into the foam in the golden cup and passed it lightly across the king's chin. He then drew forth the golden razor from his belt. But before opening it, he raised his eyes prayerfully to heaven, and spoke a few solemn words. "Allah is the light of heaven and earth! May He illuminate me in my great work!" said the interpreter, translating Mustapha's words.

Then the ambassador began his dignified work; drawing the blade of his knife across the chin of the king with a rapid movement.

The king and his generals and attendants, were scarcely able to retain their composure during this performance.

When Mustapha had finished, he signed to one of the interpreters to approach, and as he kneeled before him he wiped the foam from his razor on the back of his uplifted hand. Then thrusting it in his belt, he bowed deeply and solemnly to the king.

"May Allah keep the heart of this king as pure as his chin now is!" he said. "May the knife which Allah employs to prune away the faults of this king, pass over him as gently and painlessly as the knife of your unworthy servant has done! Mighty king and lord, the all-powerful Khan Krimgirai, the lion of the desert, the dread of his enemies, sends me to you and offers you his aid and friendship. The renown of your deeds has reached his ears, and he is lost in astonishment that a prince, of whose kingdom and existence he was in ignorance, should so long successfully resist the great German sultan, whose power we know, without fearing. The eagle eye of my master now sees clearly that he who was so insignificant is now great enough to overshadow the land of the powerful German sultan, and to make the proud and unbending czarina of the north tremble. He sends me to report to you his profound admiration; but first, will you allow me, O eagle king of the north! to present the gifts which he offers you?"

"I shall be delighted to receive these gifts," said the king, smiling, "as they are a proof of the friendship of the great Khan."

Mustapha Aga made a signal in the direction of the door, and spoke a few words aloud. Immediately there appeared the two men who were so richly dressed in Turkish costumes, and had been at the head of the cavalcade. They stationed themselves on either side of the entrance, and were followed by the lower officers and servants attached to the embassy, who entered, bearing baskets delicately woven and lined with rich stuffs.

Mustapha signed to the first two to approach him, and then, before opening the basket, he turned once more to the king.

"Sire," said he, "before a Tartar gives a promise of love and friendship to any one, he invites him to his house, and begs him to eat of his bread and drink of his wine. Sire, my great and respected master makes use of his unworthy servant to entreat your majesty to descend from your throne and to enter his house, where he is present in spirit, and bids the eagle king of the north welcome."

"I should be delighted to grant this request," returned the king, smiling, "were the distance not so great between my house and that of the Khan."

"Sire, the house of my great master is before your door," said Mustapha Aga, bowing deeply. "On the day of our departure, the Khan walked through it and kissed its walls, and exclaimed: 'Be greeted, my great and royal brother, you eagle of the north! Be welcome, you hero-king, the hated enemy of the czarina, Krimgirai offers you his heart, and would be your friend for all time.' Sire, thus spoke my lord the Khan; the air in his house is still vibrating with the words he uttered. Will your majesty condescend to leave your throne and visit my great master, the Khan Krimgirai?"

The king arose instantly and said, "I am well pleased to do so. Lead me to the palace of your Khan."

Mustapha Aga signed to the basket-carriers and to the other attendants to leave the room, and then spoke a few rapid and emphatic words to the interpreters, who followed them. Then bowing to the ground before the king, he turned and passed out of the house.

Before the door a wonderful spectacle presented itself to the astonished view of the king. Immediately opposite the house, on the open square, a high tent, of considerable size, appeared, around which was a wall of fur, well calculated to protect it from the cold air and rough winds. A carpet covered the way from the door of the tent to the king's house, and from within the tent could be heard the gentle notes of a peculiar music.

"Really," said the king to his ambassador, Von Rexin, "I seem to be living in the 'Arabian Nights.' There is nothing wanting but the beautiful Scheherezade."

"Sire, perhaps she also is here," said Von Rexin; "we were accompanied by a close chariot, guarded by four of the khan's eunuchs."

The king laughed, and said, "We will see," and he rapidly approached the hut. As he reached it, the door flew open, and Mustapha Aga received him kneeling, while his attendants threw themselves to the ground, touching it with their foreheads.

The king entered and examined with great curiosity the house of the Khan. The interior of this immense tent was hung with crimson draperies, amongst which arose twenty golden pillars which supported the tent. At the top of these was an immense golden ring from which the crimson draperies hung, and above this ring were twenty golden pillars which, uniting in the centre at the top, formed the dome of the tent. From the centre hung a golden vase, in which burned the rarest incense. The floor was covered by a great Turkish carpet, and against the walls stood several divans, such as are generally used in the dwellings of the wealthy Turks. In the centre of the tent, just under the suspended vase, stood a low, gilt table, decked with a service of glittering porphyry. One side

of the tent was separated from the rest by heavy curtains of a costly material, and from hence came the sound of music, which now arose in loud, triumphant tones, as if greeting the king.

His majesty moved rapidly to the middle of the tent, while his attendants stood against the walls, and Mustapha Aga and his interpreter stood near the king.

Mustapha then took a sword which was on the table, and, after kissing it, handed it to the king. "Sire," he said, "the great Krimgirai first offers you his sword, as a sign of his love and goodwill. He begs that on the day of the great victory which you and he will undoubtedly gain over the hated czarina of the north, you will wear this sword at your side. A sword like this—tempered in the same fire and ornamented with the same design—is worn by the Khan. When these two swords cut the air, Russia will tremble as if shaken by an earthquake."

The king received the sword from Mustapha Aga, and looked at it attentively. Then pointing to the golden letters which ornamented the blade, he asked the significance of the motto.

"Sire," replied Mustapha, solemnly, "it is the battle-cry of the Tartar: 'Death is preferable to defeat.'"

"I accept the sword with great pleasure," said the king. "This motto embodies in a few words the history of a war, and discloses more of its barbarity, than many learned and pious expositions could do. I thank the Khan for his beautiful gift."

"The Khan hears your words, sire, for his spirit is among us."

Mustapha, after begging the king to seat himself upon the large divan, drew aside the opening of the tent, when the servants with the covered baskets immediately appeared, and placed themselves in a double row around the tent. Mustapha then took the basket from the first couple, and throwing back the cover, said: "Sire, will you condescend to eat of the bread and drink of the favorite beverage of the Khan, that the ties of your friendship may be strengthened? The Khan sends you a costly ham—a proof of his unselfish friendship. He had his favorite horse killed, the one that he has ridden for years, that he might offer you a ham from this noble animal."

As the interpreter translated these words, the Prussian generals and officers glanced smiling and mockingly at one another.

The king alone remained grave, and turning to the generals, he said in German:

"Ah, gentlemen! how happy we would have been, had any one brought us this meat at the siege of Bunzelwitz, and how ravenously we would have eaten it!"

He then turned again to the ambassador, who, taking from the

other baskets Carian dates and almonds, and other Eastern dainties in silver dishes, placed them before the king. Mustapha then uttered a loud, commanding cry, and the door of the tent was again opened, and there appeared a Tartar, dressed in white wolf-skin, bearing a golden dish, which contained a steaming, white liquid. He took it, and kneeled with it before Frederick.

"Sire," said he, "my master begs you to drink with him of his favorite beverage. He pressed his lips to the rim of this dish before sending it to you, and if you will now do the same, the eagle and hero of the north will receive the brotherly kiss of the eagle and hero of the south."

"What is it?" asked the king, in a low voice, of Baron von Rexin, who stood near the divan.

"Sire, it is mare's milk!" whispered Rexin.

The king shuddered, and almost overturned the contents of the dish which he had just received from the hands of Mustapha Aga; but quickly overcoming this feeling, he raised the bowl smilingly to his mouth. After placing his lips upon the rim, he returned the bowl to the ambassador.

"I have received the kiss of my friend. May our friendship be eternal!"

"Allah grant this prayer!" cried Mustapha. "Sire, Krimgirai dares, as this beverage is such a favorite with all Turks, to hope that it may please you; he therefore offers you the animal from which it was procured." He then pointed to the opening in the tent, where now appeared a noble Arabian horse, wearing a costly saddle and bridle, and a crimson saddle-cloth richly worked with pearls and precious stones.

The eyes of the king beamed with pleasure, and as he hurried through the tent and approached the horse, the animal seemed to wish to greet his new master, for it neighed loudly, and pawed the sand with its well-shaped feet. The king gently stroked its slender, shining neck and its full, fluttering mane, and looked in the great, flashing eyes.

"You are welcome, my battle-horse!" he said; "may you bear me in the next engagement either to victory or death!"

He then returned to his seat, in order to receive the remaining presents of the Khan, consisting of costly weapons and furs.

"And now, sire, the Khan begs that you will repose in his tent, and listen to the music that he loves, and look at the dances which give him pleasure. My master knows that the great King of Prussia loves music as he does, and that it gladdens your heart as it does his own. When he goes to battle—which is but going to victory—he takes with him his musicians and dancers, who must perform

the dance of triumph before him. The Khan hopes that you will permit them to dance before you, and I pray that your majesty will grant this request."

"I am ready to behold and hear all," said the king.

Immediately, at a sign from Mustapha, the curtain which concealed part of the tent was withdrawn, and four lovely girls, clothed in light, fluttering apparel, appeared and commenced a graceful, beautiful dance, to the music of the mandoline. When they had finished, they retired to the curtain, and looked with great, wondering eyes at the Prussian warrior. Then appeared from behind the curtain four young men, who seated themselves opposite the girls. The musicians began a new strain, in which the girls and young men joined. Then two of the girls arose, and drawing their veils over their faces so that only their eyes were visi le, they danced lightly and swayingly to the end of the tent, and then returned to the young men, who now commenced the love-songs, with downcast eyes, not daring to call the name of the objects of their tenderness, but addressing them in poetical terms; and then they sang to the same air the battle-song of the Tartars. In this song, the battles are not only pictured forth, but you hear the shrieks of the warriors, the battle-cry of the Tartars, and, at length, when the battle is won, the loud shouts of rejoicing from the women. When the song was ended, the singers bowed themselves to the earth, and then disappeared behind the curtain..

The music ceased, and the king, rising from the divan, and turning to Mustapha, said:

"I owe to the Khan a most delightful morning, and I will take a pleasant remembrance of his house with me."

"Sire," said Mustapha, "the Khan begs you to accept this tent as a proof of his friendship."

The king bowed smilingly, and as he left the tent, told Rexin to ask the Tartar ambassador to come to him now for a grave conference.

The king then dismissed his generals and attendants, and entered his house, followed by Baron von Rexin and the Turkish ambassador and his interpreters.

"Now we will speak of business!" said the king. "What news do you bring me from the Khan? What answer does he make to my proposition?"

"Sire, he is willing to grant all that your majesty desires, and to give you every assistance in his power, provided you will not make peace with our hated enemy—with Russia—but will continue the war unweariedly and unceasingly, until Russia is humbled at our feet."

"Ah!" exclaimed the king, "the Khan of Tartary cannot hate the Empress of Russia more vindictively than she hates me; he need

not fear, therefore, an alliance between me and Russia. I have myself no desire to form a friendship with those rough barbarians."

"If the Empress of Russia hates you, she hates Krimgirai equally. Russia hates every thing that is noble and true; she hates enlightenment and cultivation. Russia hates Krimgirai, because he has civilized his people; because he has changed his rough hordes of men into a mighty army of brave warriors; because he governs his kingdom with humanity, and is, at the same time, a father to his people and a scourge to his enemies. Krimgirai hates Russia as he hates every thing that is wicked, and vicious, and cruel; therefore he is willing to stand by your side against Russia, with an army of six thousand men, and, if you wish it, to invade Russia."

"And what are the conditions which the Khan demands for this assistance?"

"He wishes you to pay his soldiers as you pay your own."

"And for himself?"

"For himself, he begs that you will send him a physician who can cure him of a painful but not dangerous disease. Further, he begs for your confidence and friendship."

"Which I gladly give him!" said the king, gayly. "But tell me one other thing. Has the Khan not yet become reconciled to the Grand Sultan?"

"Sire, the sultan feels that he cannot spare his brave Khan; he made an overture, which Krimgirai gladly accepted. One week before we started on our journey, the Khan was received by the sultan in his seraglio. The heads of forty rebels were displayed as a special honor in front of the seraglio, and, in the presence of the sultan himself, my master was again presented with belt and sword, and again reinstalled as Khan. The sultan also presented him with a purse containing forty thousand ducats. You see, sire, that the sultan prizes and acknowledges the virtues of your ally."

"And how do we stand with the Porte?" asked the king, turning to Baron von Rexin.

"I have succeeded, sire, in establishing a treaty between your majesty and the Porte! I shall have the honor to lay it before your majesty for your signature."

The king's eyes beamed with delight, as he exclaimed:

"At length I have attained the desired goal, and in spite of the whole of Europe. I have my allies!"

Then turning once more to Mustapha Aga, he dismissed him for the day, and gave him permission to occupy the magnificent tent which had been presented to him by the Khan, during the remainder of his visit.

Mustapha Aga then withdrew with his interpreter, leaving the

king alone with the Baron von Rexin, who now presented to him the papers which it was necessary he should sign, to establish the long-desired alliance with Turkey. This treaty assured to Prussia all the privileges which Turkey accorded to the other European powers: free navigation, the rights of ambassadors and consuls, and the personal liberty of any Prussian subjects who might have been seized as slaves.

The king signed the treaty, and named Baron von Rexin his minister plenipotentiary, and commanded him to return with the ambassador from Tartary and present the signed treaty to the Grand Sultan.

"Now the struggle can begin anew," said Frederick, when he was once more alone. "I will recommence with the new year; I will battle as I have already done; I will consider nothing but my honor and the glory of Prussia. I will not live to see the moment when I will consent to a disgraceful peace. No representations, no eloquence shall bring me to acknowledge my own shame. I will be buried under the ruins of my native land, or if this consolation be denied me by my unfortunate fate, I will know how to end my misfortunes. Honor alone has led my footsteps, and I will follow no other guide. I sacrificed my youth to my father, my manhood to my country, and I have surely gained the right to dispose of my old age. There are people who are docile and obedient toward fate. I am not one of them. Having lived for others, I dare at least die for myself, careless what the world may say. Nothing shall force me to prefer a weak old age to death. I will dare all for the accomplishment of my plans; they failing, I will die an honorable death. But no! no!" said the king, smiling after a short pause. "I will not indulge in such sad and despairing thoughts on the day which has shown me the first ray of sunlight after so many storms. Perhaps the year sixty-two will be more fortunate than the one just passed. I stand no longer alone; I have my friends and my allies. Why should I care that the world calls them unbelievers? I have seen Christians betray and murder one another. Perhaps unbelievers are better Christians than believers. We will try them, at least. When all deserted me, they offered me the hand of friendship. This is the first sunbeam which has greeted me. Perhaps bright days may now follow the storms. May God grant it!" *

* The king was not deceived. The Empress Elizabeth died in the commencement of the year 1762. Her successor, Peter the Third, was a passionate admirer of Frederick the Great, and he now became the ally of Prussia. The Empress Catharine approved this change, and remained the ally of Prussia. France now withdrew from the contest; and in the year 1763, Austria, finding her treasury completely exhausted, was compelled to make peace with Prussia. Prussia had no use for her new ally of Tartary, and Krimgirai, who was already on the march, returned home with his army.—See "Mémoires du Baron de Tott sur les Turcs et les Tartares."

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE KING'S RETURN.

BERLIN was glittering in festal adornment! This was a great, a joyous day; the first gleam of sunshine, after many long years of sorrow, suffering, and absolute want. For the last seven years the king had been absent from his capital—to-day he would return to Berlin.

After seven years of bloody strife, the powers at Hubertsburg had declared peace. No nation had enlarged its boundaries by this war. Not one of the cities or fortresses of the King of Prussia had been taken from him, and he was forced to content himself with his former conquest. There had been no successful results! Losses only were to be calculated.

During these seven years, Russia had lost one hundred and eighty thousand men, the French two hundred thousand, the Prussians a hundred and twenty thousand, the English and confederate Germans a hundred and sixty thousand, and the Saxons ninety thousand—lastly, the Swedes and the States sixty thousand. This seven years' war cost Europe nearly a million of men. Their blood fertilized the German soil, and their bones lay mouldering beneath her green sods.

Throughout all Europe, weeping mothers, wives, and children turned their sorrowful faces toward the land which had robbed them of their dear loved ones; they were even deprived the painfully sweet consolation of weeping over these lonely and neglected graves.

Losses were not only to be counted in myriads of men, whose blood had been shed in vain, but uncounted millions had been lavished upon the useless strife.

During this war, the debt of England had increased to seventy million pounds sterling; the yearly interest on the debt was four and a half million crowns. The Austrians calculated their debt at five hundred million guldens; France at two thousand million livres; Sweden was almost bankrupt, and unfortunate Saxony had to pay to Prussia during the war over seven million crowns.

In the strict meaning of the term, Prussia had made no debt, but she was, in fact, as much impoverished as her adversaries. The Prussian money which was circulated during the war was worthless.

At the close of the war, all those who carried these promissory notes shared the fate of the rich man in the fairy tale. The money collected at night turned to ashes before morning. This was the fatal fruit of the war which for seven years had scourged Europe. Prussia, however, had reason to be satisfied and even grateful. Although bleeding from a thousand wounds, exhausted and faint unto death, she promised a speedy recovery; she was full of youthful power and energy—had grown, morally, during this seven years' struggle—had become great under the pressure of hardship and self-denial, and now ranked with the most powerful nations of Europe.

To-day, however, suffering and destitution were forgotten; only smiling, joyous faces were seen in Berlin. The whole city seemed to be invigorated by the golden rays of fortune; no one appeared to suffer, no one to mourn for the lost—and yet amongst the ninety-eight thousand inhabitants of Berlin, over thirty thousand received alms weekly—so that a third of the population were objects of charity. To-day no one thirsted, no one was hungry; all hearts were merry, all faces glad!

They had not seen their great King Frederick for seven years; they would look upon him to-day. The royal family had arrived from Magdeburg.

Every one hastened to the streets to see Frederick, who on his departure had been but the hero-king of Prussia, but who now, on his return, was the hero of all Europe—whom all nations greeted—whose name was uttered in Tartary, in Africa, with wonder and admiration—yes, in all parts of the civilized and uncivilized world!

The streets were filled with laughing crowds; all pressed toward the Frankfort gate, where the king was to enter. The largest arch of triumph was erected over this gate, and all other streets were decorated somewhat in the same manner. Every eye was turned toward this street; all were awaiting with loudly-beating hearts the appearance of that hero whose brow was decked with so many costly laurels. No heart was more impatient, no one gazed so eagerly at the Frankfort gate as the good Marquis d'Argens; he stood at the head of the burghers, near the arch of triumph; he had organized the citizens for this festal reception; he had left his cherished retirement for love of his royal friend; to welcome him, he had ventured into the cutting wind of a cold March morning. For Frederick's sake he had mounted a horse, a deed of daring he had not ventured upon for many a year; in his lively impatience, he

even forgot the danger of being run away with or dragged in the dust.

The marquis knew well that nothing could be more disagreeable to the king than this public reception, but his heart was overflowing with hope and happiness, and he felt the necessity of shouting his *vivats* in the sunny air. In the egotism of his love, he forgot to respect the preferences of the king.

Perhaps Frederick suspected this triumph which his good Berliners had prepared for him. Perhaps it appeared to his acute sensibilities and noble heart altogether inappropriate to welcome the returned soldiers with wild shouts of joy, when so many thousand loved ones were lying buried on the bloody battle-field. Perhaps he did not wish to see Berlin, where his mother had so lately died, adorned in festal array.

Hour after hour passed. The sun was setting. The flowers which had been taken from the greenhouses to decorate the arch of triumph, bowed their lovely heads sadly in the rough March winds. The fresh, cool breeze whistled through the light draperies and displaced their artistic folds. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of the citizens, they began to be hungry, and to long greatly for the conclusion of these solemnities. Still the king came not. The Berliners waited awhile longer, and then one after another quietly withdrew. This bad example was speedily imitated, and the gay *cortége* of riders grew small by degrees and beautifully less. At sunset but a few hundred citizens remained at the gate, and even these heroic Spartans showed but little of the enthusiasm of the morning.

Marquis d'Argens was in despair, and if Frederick had arrived at this moment he would have heard a reproachful phillipic from his impatient friend instead of a hearty welcome. But fortune did not favor him so far as to give him the opportunity to relieve his temper. The king did not appear. The marquis at last proposed to the citizens to get torches, and thus in spite of the darkness give to their king a glittering reception. They agreed cheerfully, and the most of them dashed off to the city to make the necessary preparations.

The streets were soon brilliantly lighted, and now in the distance the king's carriage was seen approaching. Throughout the vast train shouts and *vivats* were heard, and the proud voices of this happy people filled the air as with the thunder of artillery.

"Long life to the king! Long life to Frederick the Great!"

The carriage came nearer and nearer, and now myriads of lights danced around it. The citizens had returned with their torches, and the carriage of Frederick rolled on as if in a sea of fire. It drew up at the arch of triumph. The king rose and turned his face toward his people, who were shouting their glad welcome. The

light from the torches fell upon his countenance, and their red lustre gave his cheek a fresh and youthful appearance.

His subjects saw once more his sparkling, speaking eye, in which shone the same energy, the same imperial power, as in days gone by. They saw the soft, sympathetic smile which played around his eloquent lips—they saw him, their king, their hero, and were glad. They laughed and shouted with rapture. They stretched out their arms as if to clasp in one universal embrace their dear-loved king, who was so great, so beautiful, so far above them in his bright radiance. They threw him fond kisses, and every utterance of his name seemed a prayer to God for his happiness.

But one stood by the carriage who could not speak—whose silent, trembling lips were more eloquent than words. No language could express the delight of D'Argent—no words could paint the emotion which moved his soul and filled his eyes with tears.

The king recognized him, and holding out his hand invited him to take a seat in the carriage. Then giving one more greeting to his people, he said, "Onward—onward to Charlottenburg."

At a quick pace the carriage drove through Berlin. Those who had not had the courage and strength to await the king at the Frankfort gate, were now crowding the streets to welcome him.

Frederick did not raise himself again from the dark corner of the carriage. He left it to the Duke of Brunswick to return the salutations of the people. He remained motionless, and did not even appear to hear the shouts of his subjects. Not once did he raise his hand to greet them—not a word passed his lips.

When they crossed the king's bridge and reached the castle grounds, the people were assembled and closely crowded together. Frederick now raised himself, but he did not see them—he did not regard the brilliantly illuminated houses, or the grounds sparkling in a flood of light. He turned slowly and sadly toward the castle—his eye rested upon that dark, gloomy mass of stone, which arose to the right, and contrasted mysteriously with the brilliant houses around it. It looked like a monstrous coffin surrounded by death-lights. Frederick gazed long and steadily at the castle. He raised his head once more, but not to greet his subjects. He covered his face—he would not be looked at in his grief. D'Argens heard him murmur, "My mother, oh my mother! Oh, my sister!"

The Prussians welcomed joyously the return of their great king, but Frederick thought only at this moment of those who could never return—those whom death had torn from him forever. Onward, onward through the lighted streets! All the inhabitants of Berlin seemed to be abroad. This was a Roman triumph, well calculated to fill the heart of a sovereign with just pride.

The Berliners did not see that Frederick had no glance for them. Gloom and despair veiled his countenance, and no one dreamed that this king, whom they delighted to honor, was at this proud moment a weeping son, a mourning brother.

At last the joyous, careless city lay behind them, and they approached Charlottenburg.

The noise and tumult gradually ceased, and a welcome quiet ensued. Frederick did not utter one word, and no one dared to break the oppressive silence. This triumphant procession seemed changed to a burial-march. The victor in so many battles seemed now mastered by his memories.

The carriage drew up at Charlottenburg. The wide court was filled with the inhabitants of the little city, who welcomed the king as enthusiastically as the Berliners had done. Frederick saluted them abruptly, and stepped quickly into the hall.

The castle had been changed into a temple of glory and beauty in honor of the king's return. The pillars which supported it were wound around with wreaths of lovely, fragrant blossoms; costly draperies, gay flags, and emblems adorned the walls; the floors were covered with rich Turkish carpets; the gilded candelabras shed their variegated lights in every direction, irradiating the faces of the court cavaliers glittering with stars and orders, and the rich toilets of the ladies. The effect was dazzling.

In the middle of the open space two ladies were standing, one in royal attire, sparkling in diamonds and gold embroideries, the other in mourning, with no ornament but pearls, the emblem of tears. The one with a happy, hopeful face gazed at the king; the other with a sad, weary countenance, in which sickness, sorrow, and disappointment had drawn their heavy lines, turned slowly toward him; her large eyes, red with weeping, were fixed upon him with an angry, reproachful expression.

Frederick drawing near, recognized the queen and the Princess Amelia. At the sight of this dearly-beloved face, the queen, forgetting her usual timidity and assumed coldness, stepped eagerly forward and offered both her hands to her husband. Her whole heart, the long-suppressed fervor of her soul, spoke in her moist and glowing eyes. Her lips, which had so long been silent, so long guarded their sweet secret, expressed, though silently, fond words of love. Elizabeth Christine was no longer young, no longer beautiful; she had passed through many years of suffering and inward struggle, but at this moment she was lovely. The eternal youth of the soul lighted her fair brow—the flash of hope and happiness glimmered in her eyes. But Frederick saw nothing of this. He had no sympathy for this pale and gentle queen, now glowing with

vitality. He thought only of the dearly-loved queen and mother who had gone down into the cold, dark grave. Frederick bowed coldly to Elizabeth Christine, and took both her hands in his a short moment.

"Madame," said he, "this is a sad moment. The queen my mother is missing from your side."

Elizabeth Christine started painfully, and the hands which the king had released fell powerless to her side. Frederick's harsh, cruel words had pierced her heart and quenched the tears of joy and hope which stood in her eyes.

Elizabeth was incapable of reply. Princess Amelia came to her relief.

"If my brother, the king, while greeting us after his long absence, is unconscious of our presence and sees only the faces of the dead, he must also be forced to look upon my unhappy brother, Prince Augustus William, who died of a broken heart."

The king's piercing eyes rested a moment with a strangely melancholy expression upon the sorrowful, sickly face of the Princess Amelia.

"Not so, my sister," said he, softly and gently; "I not only see those who have been torn from us by death, I look upon and welcome gladly those who have been spared to me. I am happy to see you here to-day, my sister."

Frederick offered Amelia his hand, and bowing silently to those who were present, he entered his apartment, followed only by the Marquis d'Argens.

Frederick stepped rapidly through the first room, scarcely looking at the new paintings which adorned the walls; he entered his study and threw a long, thoughtful glance around this dear room. Every piece of furniture, every book, recalled charming memories of the past—every thing stood as he had left it seven years ago. He now for the first time realized the joy of being again at home; his country had received him and embraced him with loving arms.

With glowing cheeks he turned toward the marquis, who was leaning against the door behind him.

"Oh, D'Argens! it is sweet to be again in one's own native land—the peace of home is sweet. The old furniture appears to welcome me; that old chair stretches its arms wooingly toward me, as if to lure me to its bosom, and give me soft sleep and sweet dreams in its embrace. Marquis, I feel a longing to gratify my old friend; I yield to its gentle, silent pleadings."

Frederick stepped to the arm-chair and sank into it with an expression of indescribable comfort.

"Ah, now I feel that I am indeed at home."

"Allow me," said D'Argens, "to say, your majesty, what the dear old arm-chair, in spite of its eloquence, cannot express. I, also, am a piece of the old furniture of this dear room, and in the name of all my voiceless companions, I cry 'Welcome to my king!' We welcome you to your country and your home. You return greater even than when you left us. Your noble brow is adorned with imperishable laurels; your fame resounds throughout the earth, and every nation sings to you a hymn of victory."

"Well, well," said Frederick, smilingly, "do not look too sharply at my claims to such world-wide renown, or my fame will lose a portion of its lustre. You will see that chance has done almost every thing for me—more than my own valor and wisdom, and the bravery of my troops combined. Chance has been my best ally during this entire war.* Chance enabled me to escape the famine camp of Bunzelwitz—chance gave me the victory over my enemies. Speak no more of my fame, marquis, at least not in this sacred room, where Cicero, Cæsar, Lucretius, and Thucydides look down upon us from the walls; where the voiceless books with their gilded letters announce to us that we are surrounded by great spirits. Speak not of fame to me, D'Argens, when from yonder book-shelf I see the name of Athalie. I would rather have written Athalie, than to have all the fame arising from this seven years' war." †

"Herein I recognize the peaceful, noble tastes of my king," said D'Argens, deeply moved; "years of hardship and victory have not changed him—the conquering hero is the loving friend and the wise philosopher. I knew this must be so—I knew the heart of my king; I knew he would regard the day on which he gave peace to his people as far more glorious than any day of bloody battle and triumphant victory. The day of peace to Prussia is the most glorious, the happiest day of her great king's life."

Frederick shook his head softly, and gazed with infinite sadness at his friend's agitated countenance.

"Ah, D'Argens, believe me, the most beautiful, the happiest day is that on which we take leave of life."

As Frederick turned his eyes away from his friend, they fell accidentally upon a porcelain vase which stood upon a table near his secretary; he sprang hastily from his chair.

"How came this vase here?" he said, in a trembling voice.

"Sire," said the marquis, "the queen-mother, shortly before her death, ordered this vase to be placed in this room; she prized it highly—it was a present from her royal brother, George II. Her majesty wished that, on your return from the war, it might serve

*The king's own words.
†Ibid.

as a remembrance of your fond mother. At her command, I placed that packet of letters at the foot of the vase, after the queen-mother had sealed and addressed it with her dying hand."

Frederick was silent; he bowed his head upon the vase, as if to cool his burning brow upon its cold, glassy surface. He, perhaps, wished also to conceal from his friend the tears which rolled slowly down his cheeks, and fell upon the packet of letters lying before him.

The king kissed the packet reverentially, and examined with a deep sigh the trembling characters traced by the hand of his beloved mother.

"For my son—the king."

Frederick read the address softly. "Alas! my dear mother, how poor you have made me. I am now no longer a son—only a king!"

He bowed his head over the packet, and pressed his mother's writing to his lips, then laid the letters at the foot of the vase and remained standing thoughtfully before it.

A long pause ensued. Frederick stood with folded arms before the vase, and the marquis leaned against the door behind him. Suddenly the king turned to him.

"I beg a favor of you, marquis. Hasten to Berlin, and tell Benda he must perform the *Te Deum* of my dear Graun here in the castle chapel to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. I know the singers of the chapel can execute it—they gave it once after the battle of Leignitz. Tell Benda to make no difficulties, for it is my express wish to hear the music to-morrow morning. I trust to you, marquis, to see my wish fulfilled, to make the impossible possible, if you find it necessary. Call me capricious if you will, for desiring to hear this music to-morrow. I have so long been controlled by stern realities, that I will allow myself now to yield to a caprice."

He gave his hand to the marquis, who pressed it to his lips.

"Sire, to-morrow morning at nine o'clock the *Te Deum* shall be performed in the chapel, should I even be compelled to pass the night in arousing the musicians from their beds."

The marquis kept his word; he surmounted all difficulties, removed all objections. In vain Benda declared the organ in the chapel was out of tune, the performance impossible; the marquis hastened to the organist and obliged him to put it in order that night. In vain the singers protested against singing this difficult music before the king without preparation; D'Argens commanded them in the name of the king to have a rehearsal during the night. Thanks to his nervous energy and zeal, the singers assembled, and Benda stood before his desk to direct this midnight concert.

When the clock struck nine the next morning every difficulty

had been set aside, and every preparation completed. The organist was in his place, the organ in order; the musicians tuned their instruments, the singers were prepared, and the chapel-master, Benda, was in their midst, *bâton* in hand.

All eyes were directed toward the door opposite the choir, through which the court must enter; all hearts were beating with joyful expectation—all were anxious to see the king once more in the midst of his friends, in his family circle. Every one sympathized in the queen's happiness at being accompanied once more by her husband; laying aside her loneliness and widowhood, and appearing in public by his side.

All eyes, as we have said, were impatiently directed toward the door, waiting for the appearance of their majesties and the court.

Suddenly the door opened. Yes, there was the king. He stepped forward very quietly, his head a little bowed down; in the midst of the solemn stillness of the chapel his step resounded loudly.

Yes, it was Frederick the Great, he was alone, accompanied by no royal state, surrounded by no glittering crowd—but it was the king; in the glory of his majesty, his endurance, and his valor, radiant in the splendor of his heroic deeds and his great victories.

Frederick seated himself slowly, gave one quick glance at the choir, and waved his hand to them. Benda raised his *bâton* and gave the sign to commence. And now a stream of rich harmony floated through the chapel. The organ, with its powerful, majestic tones; the trumpets, with their joyous greeting; the drums, with their thunder, and the soft, melting tones of the violin and flute, mingled together in sweet accord.

The king, with head erect and eager countenance, listened to the beautiful and melodious introduction. He seemed to be all ear, to have no other thought, no other passion than this music, which was wholly unknown to him. And now, with a powerful accord, the sweetly-attuned human voices joined in, and the choir sang in melting unison the *Te Deum Laudamus*, which resounded solemnly, grandly through the aisles. The king turned pale, and as the hymn of praise became more full and rich, his head sank back and his eyes were fixed upon the floor.

Louder and fuller rose the solemn tones; suddenly, from the midst of the choir, a soft, melting tenor sang in a sweet, touching voice, *Tuba mirum spargeus sonum*. Frederick's head sank still lower upon his breast, and at last, no longer able to restrain his tears, he covered his face with his hands.

The lofty strains of this solemn hymn resounded through the empty church, which until now had been wrapped in gray clouds, but in a moment the sun burst from behind the clouds, darted its

rays through the windows, and lighted up the church with golden glory. The king who, until now, had been in the shadow of the cloud, was as if by magic bathed in a sea of light. All eyes were fixed upon his bowed head, his face partially covered with his hands, and the tears gushing from his eyes.

No one could withstand the silent power of this scene; the eyes of the singers filled with tears, and they could only continue their chant in soft, broken, sobbing tones, but Benda was not angry; he dared not look at them, lest they might see that his own stern eyes were veiled in tears.

Frederick seemed more and more absorbed in himself—lost in painful memories. But the loud hosannas resounded and awakened him from his slumber; he dared no longer give himself up to brooding. He arose slowly from his seat, and silent and alone, even as he had entered, he left the church.

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE HENRY.

SEVEN years had passed since Prince Henry had left his wife, to fight with his brother against his enemies. During these long years of strife and contest, neither the king nor the prince had returned to Berlin. Like the king, he also had won for himself fame and glory upon the battle-field. Much more fortunate than his brother, he had won many victories, and had not sustained a single defeat with his army corps. More successful in all his undertakings than Frederick, perhaps also more deliberate and careful, he had always chosen the right hour to attack the enemy, and was always prepared for any movement. His thoughtfulness and energy had more than once released the king from some disagreeable or dangerous position. To the masterly manner in which Prince Henry managed to unite his forces with those of his brother after the battle of Künersdorf, the king owed his escape from the enemies which then surrounded him. And to the great and glorious victory gained by Prince Henry over the troops of the empire and of Austria at Freiberg, the present happy peace was to be attributed. This battle had subdued the courage of the Austrians, and had filled the generals of the troops of the empire with such terror, that they declared at once their unwillingness to continue the war, and their determination to return with their forces to their different countries.

The battle of Freiberg was the last battle of the Seven Years' War. It brought to Prince Henry such laurels as the king had

gained at Leignitz and Torgau; it placed him at his brother's side as an equal. Frederick saw it without envy or bitterness, and rejoiced in the fulness of his great soul, in his brother's fame. When he found himself, for the first time after the Seven Years' War, surrounded at Berlin by the princes and generals, he advanced with a cordial smile to his brother, and laying his hand gently on his shoulder, said aloud:

"You see here, sirs, the only one amongst us all who did not commit a single mistake during the war!"

Seven years had passed since Prince Henry had seen his young wife, Princess Wilhelmina. He could at last return to her—to his beloved Rheinsberg, and find rest after his many years of wandering. He had written to the princess, and requested her not to meet him in Berlin, but to find some pretext for remaining at Rheinsberg. His proud soul could not endure the thought that the woman he loved, who appeared to him fit to grace the first throne of the world, would occupy an inferior position at court—would have to stand behind the queen. He had never envied the king his crown or his position, but his heart now craved the crown of the queen, for the brow of his own beautiful wife, who seemed much better fitted to wear it than the gentle, timid Elizabeth Christine. Princess Wilhelmina had therefore remained at Rheinsberg, feigning sickness.

It was night! The castle of Rheinsberg glittered with the light of the torches by which the gates were adorned, to welcome the prince to his home. The saloons and halls were brilliantly lighted, and in them a gay, merry crowd was assembled. All the prince's friends and acquaintances had been invited by Princess Wilhelmina to greet his return.

Every thing in the castle bore the appearance of happiness—all seemed gay and cheerful. But still, there was one whose heart was beating anxiously at the thought of the approaching hour—it was the Princess Wilhelmina. She was gorgeously dressed; diamonds glittered on her brow and throat, bright roses gleamed upon her breast, and a smile was on her full, red lips. No one knew the agony this smile cost her! No one knew that the red which burned upon her cheek was caused, not by joy, but terror!

Yes, terror! She was afraid of this meeting, in which she was to receive the prince as her loved husband, while, during the long years of absence, he had become a perfect stranger to her. Not even bound to him by the daily occurrences of life, she had no sympathies with the husband who had been forced upon her, and who had once contemptuously put aside the timid heart that was then prepared to love him. This stranger she was now to meet with every sign of

love, because he had one day waked up to the conviction that the heart he had once spurned was worthy of him. It was her duty now to return this love—to consecrate the rich treasures of her heart to him who had once scorned them. Her soul rose in arms at this thought like an insulted lioness, and she felt some of that burning hatred that the lioness feels for her master who wishes to tame her with an iron rod. The prince was to her but her master, who had bound and held her heart in irons, to keep it from escaping from him.

During these seven long years, she had experienced all the freedom and happiness of girlhood; her heart had beat with a power, a fire condemned by the princess herself, but which she was incapable of extinguishing.

Trembling and restless, she wandered through the rooms, smiling when she would have given worlds to have shrieked out her pain, her agony; decked in splendid garments, when she would gladly have been in her shroud. Every sound, every step, filled her with terror, for it might announce the arrival of her husband, whom she must welcome with hypocritical love and joy. Could she but show him her scorn, her hatred, her indifference! But the laws of etiquette held her in their stern bonds and would not release her. She was a princess, and could not escape from the painful restraints of her position. She had not the courage to do so. At times in her day-dreams, she longed to leave all the cold, deceitful glare, by which she was surrounded—to go to some far-distant valley, and there to live alone and unknown, by the side of her lover, where no etiquette would disturb their happiness—where she would be free as the birds of the air, as careless as the flowers of the field. But these wild dreams vanished when the cold, cruel reality appeared to her. By the side of the once-loving woman stood again the princess, who could not surrender the splendor and magnificence by which she was surrounded. She had not the courage nor the wish to descend from her height to the daily life of common mortals. There was dissension in her soul between the high-born princess and the loving, passionate woman. She was capable of making any and every sacrifice for her love, but she had never openly confessed this love, and even in her wildest dreams she had never thought of changing her noble name and position for those of her lover. She could have fled with him to some distant valley, but would she be happy? Would she not regret her former life? Princess Wilhelmina felt the dissension in her soul, and therefore she trembled at the thought of her husband's return. This meeting would decide her whole future. Perhaps she could still be saved. The prince, returning covered with fame and crowned with laurels, might now win her love, and

drive from her heart every other thought. But if he cannot win it—if his return is not sufficient to loosen the chains which bind her—then she was lost—then she could not resist the intoxicating whispers luring her to ruin.

These were Princess Wilhelmina's thoughts as she leaned against a window of the brilliant ball-room, the protection of whose heavy curtains she had sought to drive for a moment from her face the gay smile and to breathe out the sighs that were almost rending her heart. She was gazing at the dark night without—at the bright, starry sky above. Her lips moved in a low prayer—her timid soul turned to God with its fears.

"O God, my God!" murmured she, "stand by me. Take from me the sinful thoughts that fill my heart. Make me to love my husband. Keep my soul free from shame and sin."

Hasty steps, loud, merry voices from the hall, disturbed her dreams. She left her retreat, meeting everywhere gay smiles and joyous faces. At the door stood the prince her husband. He advanced eagerly to her side, and ignoring etiquette and the gay assemblage alike he pressed the princess to his heart and kissed her on both cheeks.

Wilhelmina drew from him in deadly terror, and a burning anger filled her heart. Had she loved the prince, this public demonstration of his tenderness would perhaps have pleased and surely been forgiven by her. As it was, she took his embrace and kisses as an insult, which was only to be endured by compulsion—for which she would surely revenge herself.

Prince Henry was so joyous, so happy at meeting his wife once more, that he did not notice her embarrassed silence, her stiff haughtiness, and thought she shared his joy, his delight.

This confidence seemed to the princess presumptuous and humiliating. She confessed to herself that the prince's manners were not in the least improved by his long campaign—that they were somewhat *brusque*. He took her hand tenderly; leading her to a divan, and seated himself beside her, but suddenly jumping up he left her, and returned in a few moments with his friend Count Kalkreuth.

"Permit me, Wilhelmina," said he, "to introduce to you again my dear friend and companion in arms. Men say I have won some fame, but I assure you that if it is true, Kalkreuth deserves the largest share, for he was the gardener who tended my laurels with wise and prudent hands. I commend him, therefore, to your kindness and friendship, Wilhelmina, and beg you to evince for him a part of that affection you owe to me, and which causes my happiness."

There was something so noble, so open, and knightly in the

prince's manner, that Count Kalkreuth, deeply touched, thought in his heart for a moment that he would not deceive this noble friend with treachery and faithlessness.

The prince's words had a different effect upon the princess. Instead of being touched by his great confidence in her, she was insulted. It indicated great arrogance and self-conceit to be so sure of her love as to see no danger, but to bring his friend to her and commend him to her kindness. It humiliated her for the prince to speak with such confidence of her affection as of a thing impossible to lose. She determined, therefore, to punish him. With a bright smile, she held out her hand to the count, and said to him a few kind words of welcome. How she had trembled at the thought of this meeting—how she had blushed at the thought of standing beside the count with the conviction that not one of her words was forgotten—that the confession of love she had made to the departing soldier belonged now to the returned nobleman! But her husband's confidence had shorn the meeting of all its terror, and made the road she had to travel easy.

The count bowed deeply before her and pressed her hand to his lips. She returned the pressure of his hand, and, as he raised his head and fixed an almost imploring glance upon her, he encountered her eyes beaming with unutterable love.

The court assembly stood in groups, looking with cold, inquisitive eyes at the piquant scene the prince in the innocence of his heart had prepared for them—which was to them an inimitable jest, an excellent amusement. They all knew—what the prince did not for a moment suspect—that Count Kalkreuth adored the princess. They now desired to see if this love was returned by the princess, or suffered by her as a coquette.

None had gazed at this scene with such breathless sympathy, such cruel joy, as Madame du Trouffle. Being one of the usual circle at Rheinsberg, she had been invited by the princess to the present *fête*, and it seemed to her very amusing to receive her own husband, not at their home, but at the castle of her former lover. Major du Trouffle was on the prince's staff, and had accompanied him to Rheinsberg.

Louise had not as yet found time to greet her husband. Her glance was fixed eagerly upon the princess; she noticed her every movement, her every look; she watched every smile, every quiver of her lip. Her husband stood at her side—he had been there for some time, greeting her in low, tender words—but Louise did not attend to him. She seemed not to see him; her whole soul was in her eyes, and they were occupied with the princess. Suddenly she turns her sparkling eyes upon her husband and murmurs: "He is

lost! His laurels will be insufficient to cover the brand which from to-day on will glow upon his brow!" Her husband looked at her in amazement.

"Is this your welcome, after seven long years of absence, Louise?" said he, sadly.

She laid her hand hastily upon his arm, saying, "Hush, hush!" Once more she gazed at the princess, who was talking and laughing gayly with her husband and Count Kalkreuth. "How her cheeks glow, and what tender glances she throws him!" murmured Louise. "Ah! the prince has fallen a victim to his ingenuousness! Verily, he is again praising the merits of his friend. He tells her how Kalkreuth saved his life—how he received the blow meant for his own head. Poor prince! You will pay dearly for the wound Kalkreuth received for you. I said, and I repeat it—he is lost!"

Her husband looked at her as if he feared she had gone mad during his absence. "Of whom do you speak, Louise?" whispered he. "What do you mean? Will you not speak one word of welcome to me to convince me that you know me—that I have not become a stranger to you?"

The princess now arose from her seat, and leaning on her husband's arm she passed through the room, talking merrily with Count Kalkreuth at her side.

"They have gone to the conservatory," said Louise, grasping her husband's arm. "We will also go and find some quiet, deserted place where we can talk undisturbed."

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Louise du Trouffle drew her husband onward, and they both followed silently the great crowd which was now entering the splendidly illuminated conservatories. The view offered to the eye was superb. You seemed to be suddenly transplanted as if by magic from the stiff, ceremonious court-saloons into the fresh, fragrant, blooming world of nature. You breathed with rapture the odor of those rare and lovely flowers which were arranged in picturesque order between the evergreen myrtles and oranges. The windows, and indeed the ceiling were entirely covered with vines, and seemed to give color to the illusion that you were really walking in an open alley. Colored Chinese balloons attached to fine chains, fell from the ceiling, and seemed to float like gay butterflies between the trees and flowers. They threw their soft, faint, many-colored lights

through these enchanting halls, on each side of which little grottoes had been formed by twining together myrtles, palms, and fragrant bushes. Each one of these held a little grass-plot, or green divan, and these were so arranged that the branches of the palms were bent down over the seats, and concealed those who rested there behind a leafy screen.

To one of these grottoes Louise now led her husband. "We will rest here awhile," said she. "This grotto has one advantage—it lies at the corner of the wall and has but one open side, and leafy bushes are thickly grouped about it. We have no listeners to fear, and may chat together frankly and harmlessly. And now, first of all, welcome, my husband—welcome to your home!"

"God be thanked, Louise—God be thanked that you have at last known how to speak one earnest word, and welcome me to your side! Believe me, when I say that through all these weary years, each day I have rejoiced at the thought of this moment. It has been my refreshment and my consolation. I truly believe that the thought of you and my ardent desire to see you was a talisman which kept death afar off. It seemed to me impossible to die without seeing you once more. I had a firm conviction that I would live through the war and return to you. Thus I defied the balls of the enemy, and have returned to repose on your heart, my beloved wife—after the storms and hardships of battle to fold you fondly in my arms and never again to leave you." He threw his arms around her waist, and pressed his lips with a tender kiss upon her mouth.

Louise suffered this display of tenderness for one moment, then slipped lightly under his arms and retreated a few steps.

"Do you know," said she, with a low laugh, "that was a true, respectable husband's kiss; without energy and without fire; not too cold, not too warm—the tepid, lukewarm tenderness of a husband who really loves his wife, and might be infatuated about her, if she had not the misfortune to be his wife?"

"Ah! you are still the old Louise," said the major merrily; "still the gay, coquettish, unsteady butterfly, who, with its bright, variegated wings, knows how to escape, even when fairly caught in the toils. I love you just as you are, Louise; I rejoice to find you just what I left you. You will make me young again, child; by your side I will learn again to laugh and be happy. We have lost the power to do either amidst the fatigues and hardships of our rude campaigns."

"Yes, yes," said Louise; "we dismissed you, handsome, well-formed cavaliers, and you return to us clumsy, growling bears; good-humored but savage pets, rather too willing to learn again to

dance and sing. The only question is, will the women consent to become bear-leaders, and teach the uncultivated pets their steps?"

"Well, they will be obliged to do this," said the major, laughing. "It is their duty."

"Dear friend, if you begin already to remind us of our duty, I fear your cause is wholly lost. Come, let us sit here awhile upon this grass-plot and talk together."

"Yes, you will be seated, but I do not see exactly why we should talk together. I would much rather close your laughing, rosy lips with kisses." He drew her to his side, and was about to carry out this purpose, but Louise waved him off.

"If you do not sit perfectly quiet by my side," said she, "I will unfold the gay wings, of which you have just spoken, and fly far away!"

"Well, then, I will sit quietly; but may I not be permitted to ask my shy prudish mistress why I must do so?"

"Why? Well, because I wish to give my savage pet his first lecture after his return. The lecture begins thus: When a man remains absent from his wife seven years, he has no right to return as a calm, confident, self-assured husband, with his portion of home-baked tenderness; he should come timidly, as a tender, attentive, enamoured cavalier, who woos his mistress and draws near to her humbly, tremblingly, and submissively—not looking upon her as his wife, but as the fair lady whose love he may hope to win."

"But why, Louise, should we take refuge in such dissimulation, when we are assured of your love?"

"You are assured of nothing! How can you be so artless as to believe that these seven years have passed by and left no trace, and that we feel exactly to-day as we did before this fearful war? When you have opened the door and given liberty to the bird whose wings you have cut, and whose wild heart you have tamed in a cage; when the captive flies out into the fresh, free air of God, floats merrily along in the midst of rejoicing, laughing Nature—will he, after years have passed, will he, if you shall please to wish once more to imprison him, return willingly to his cage? I believe you would have to entice him a long time—to whisper soft, loving, flattering words, and place in the cage the rarest dainties before you could induce him to yield up his golden freedom, and to receive you once more as his lord and master. But if you seek to arrest him with railing and threats—with wise and grave essays on duty and constancy—he will swing himself on the lofty branch of a tree, so high that you cannot follow, and whistle at you!"

"You are right, I believe," said Du Trouffle, thoughtfully. "I see to-day a new talent in you, Louise; you have become a philosopher."

"Yes, and I thirst to bring my wisdom to bear against a man," said Louise, laughingly. "I hope you will profit by it! Perhaps it may promote your happiness, and enable you to recapture your bird. You will not at least make shipwreck on the breakers against which the good prince dashed his head to-day; he was wounded and bleeding, and will carry the mark upon his brow as long as he lives."

"What has he done which justifies so melancholy a prognostication?"

"What has he done? He returned to his wife, not as a lover but as a husband; he did not kiss her hand tremblingly and humbly and timidly—seek to read in her glance if she were inclined to favor him; he advanced with the assurance of a conquering hero, and before the whole world he gave her a loud, ringing kiss, which resounded like the trump of victory. The good prince thought that because the outside war was at an end and you had made peace with your enemies, all other strifes and difficulties had ceased, and you had all entered upon an epoch of everlasting happiness; that, by the sides of your fond and faithful wives, you had nothing to do but smoke the calumet of peace. But he made a great and dangerous mistake, and he will suffer for it. I tell you, friend, the war which you have just closed was less difficult, less alarming than the strife which will now be carried on in your families. The wicked foe has abandoned the battle-field to you, but he is crouched down upon your hearths and awaits you at the sides of your wives and daughters."

"Truly, Louise, your words, make me shudder! and my heart, which was beating so joyfully, seems now to stand still."

Louise paid no attention to his words, but went on:

"You say the war is at an end. I believe it has just begun. It will be carried on fiercely in every house, in every family; many hearts will break, many wounds be given, and many tears be shed before we shall have household peace. All those fond ties which united men and women, parents and children, have been shaken, or torn apart; all contracts are destroyed or undermined. In order to endure, to live through these fearful seven years, every one gave himself up to frivolity—the terrible consequence is, that the whole world has become light-minded and frivolous. We do not look upon life with the same eyes as formerly. To enjoy the present moment—to snatch that chance of happiness from the fleeting hour, which the next hour is chasing and may utterly destroy—seems the only aim. Love is an amusement, constancy a phantom, in which no one believes—which is only spoken of in nursery fairy tales. The women have learned, by experience, that their husbands and

lovers did not die of longing to see them; that they themselves, after the tears of separation, which perhaps flowed freely a long time, were once quenched, could live on alone; that independence had its bright side and was both agreeable and comfortable. The history of the widow of Ephesus is repeated every day, my friend. The women wept and were melancholy a long time after the separation from their husbands, but at last they could not close their ears to the sweet, soft words of consolation which were whispered to them; at last they realized that incessant weeping and mourning had its wearisome and monotonous side, that the dreary time flew more swiftly if they sought to amuse themselves and be happy. They allowed themselves to be comforted, in the absence of their husbands, by their lovers, and they felt no reproach of conscience; for they were convinced that their truant husbands were doing the same thing in their long separation—were making love to 'the lips that were near.'"

"Did you think and act thus, Louise?" said Major du Trouffle, in a sad and anxious tone, looking his wife firmly in the eye.

Louisa laughed with calm and unconcern.

"My friend," said she, "would I have told all this to you, if I had committed the faults I charge upon others? I have been inactive but observant; that has been my amusement, my only distraction, and my observations have filled me with amazement and abhorrence. I have drawn from these sources profound and philosophic lessons. I have studied mankind, and with full conviction I can assure you the war is not at an end, and, instead of the palm of peace, the apple of discord will flourish. Men no longer believe in constancy or honesty, every man suspects his neighbor and holds him guilty, even as he knows himself to be guilty. Every woman watches the conduct of other women with malicious curiosity; she seems to herself less guilty when she finds that others are no better than herself; and when, unhappily, she does not find that her friend is false or faithless, she will try to make her appear so; if the truth will not serve her purpose, she will, by slander and scandal, draw a veil over her own sins. Never was there as much treachery and crime as now. Calumny stands before every door, and will whisper such evil and fearful things in the ears of every returned soldier, that he will become wild with rage, and distrust his wife, no matter how innocent she may be."

"I shall not be guilty of this fault," said Major du Trouffle. "If I find slander lying in wait at my door, I will kick it from me and enter my home calmly and smilingly, without having listened to her whispers, or, if I have heard them involuntarily, without believing them."

"Then there will be at least one house in Berlin where peace will reign," said Louise, sweetly, "and that house will be ours. I welcome you in the name of our *lares*, who have been long joyfully awaiting you. I have also an agreeable surprise for you."

"What surprise, Louise?"

"You often told me that my daughter Camilla disturbed your happiness, that she stood like a dark cloud over my past, which had not belonged to you."

"It is true! I could not force my heart to love her; her presence reminded me always that you had been loved by another, had belonged to another, and had been made thoroughly wretched."

"Well then, friend, this cloud has been lifted up, and this is the surprise which awaited your return home. Camilla has been married more than a year."

"Married!" cried the major, joyfully; "who is the happy man that has undertaken to tame this wilful child, and warm her cold heart?"

"Ask rather, who is the unhappy man who was enamoured with this lovely face, and has taken a demon for an angel?" sighed Louise. "He is a young, distinguished, and wealthy Englishman, Lord Elliot, an *attaché* of the English embassy, who fulfilled the duties of minister during the absence of the ambassador, Lord Mitchel, who was generally at the headquarters of the king."

"And Camilla, did she love him?"

Louise shrugged her shoulders.

"When he made his proposals, she declared herself ready to marry him; but, I believe, his presence was less agreeable and interesting to her than the splendid gifts he daily brought her."

"But, Louise, it was her free choice to marry him? You did not persuade her? you did not, I hope, in order to humor my weakness, induce her by entreaties and representations to marry against her will?"

"My friend," said Louise, with the proud air of an injured mother, "however fondly I may have loved you, I would not have sacrificed for you the happiness of an only child. Camilla asked my consent to her marriage after she had obtained her father's permission, and I gave it. The marriage took place three days after the engagement, and the young pair made a bridal-trip to England, from which they returned a few months since."

"And where are they now?"

"They live in Berlin in an enchanting villa, which Lord Elliot has converted into a palace for his young wife. You will see them this evening, for they are both here, and—"

Louise ceased to speak; a well-known voice interrupted the

silence, and drew nearer and nearer. "Ah," whispered she, lightly, "the proverb is fulfilled, 'Speak of the wolf, and he appears.' That is Lord Elliot and Camilla speaking with such animation. Let us listen awhile."

The youthful pair had now drawn near, and stood just before the grotto.

"I find it cruel, very cruel, to deny me every innocent pleasure," said Camilla, with a harsh, displeased voice. "I must live like a nun who has taken an eternal vow; I am weary of it."

"Oh, my Camilla, you slander yourself when you say this; you are not well, and you must be prudent. I know you better than you know yourself, my Camilla. Your heart, which is clear and transparent as crystal, lies ever unveiled before me, and I listen with devout love to its every pulse. I am sure that you do not wish to dance to-day, my love."

"I wish to dance, and I will dance, because it gives me pleasure."

"Because you are like a sweet child and like the angels," said Lord Elliot, eagerly; "your heart is gay and innocent. You are like a fluttering Cupid, sleeping in flower-cups and dreaming of stars and golden sunshine; you know nothing of earthly and prosaic thoughts. I must bind your wings, my beauteous butterfly, and hold you down in the dust of this poor, pitiful world. Wait, only wait till you are well; when your health is restored, you shall be richly repaid for all your present self-denial. Every day I will procure you new pleasures, prepare you new *fêtes;* you shall dance upon carpets of roses like an elfin queen."

"You promise me that?" said Camilla; "you promise me that you will not prevent my dancing as much and as gayly as I like?"

"I promise you all this, Camilla, if you will only not dance now."

"Well," sighed she, "I agree to this; but I fear that my cousin, Count Kindar, will be seriously displeased if I suddenly refuse him the dance I promised him."

"He will excuse you, sweetheart, when I beg him to do so," said Lord Elliot, with a soft smile. "I will seek him at once, and make your excuses. Be kind enough to wait for me here, I will return immediately." He kissed her fondly upon the brow, and hastened off.

Camilla looked after him and sighed deeply; then, drawing back the long leaves of the palm, she entered the grotto; she stepped hastily back when she saw that the green divan was occupied, and tried to withdraw, but her mother held her and greeted her kindly.

Camilla laughed aloud. "Ah, mother, it appears as if I am to be ever in your way; although I no longer dwell in your house, I

still disturb your pleasures. But I am discreet; let your friend withdraw; I will not see him; I will not know his name, and when my most virtuous husband returns, he will find only two modest gentlewomen. Go, sir; I will turn away, that I may not see you."

"I rather entreat you, my dear Camilla, to turn your lovely face toward me, and to greet me kindly," said Major du Trouffle, stepping from behind the shadow of the palm, and giving his hand to Camilla.

She gazed at him questioningly, and when at last she recognized him, she burst out into a merry peal of laughter. "Truly," said she, "my mother had a rendezvous with her husband, and I have disturbed an enchanting marriage chirping. You have also listened to my married chirp, and know all my secrets. Well, what do you say, dear stepfather, to my mother having brought me so soon under the *coif*, and made her wild, foolish little Camilla the wife of a lord?"

"I wish you happiness with my whole soul, dear Camilla, and rejoice to hear from your mother that you have made so excellent a choice, and are the wife of so amiable and intellectual a man."

"So, does mamma say that Lord Elliot is all that? She may be right, I don't understand these things. I know only that I find his lordship unspeakably wearisome, that I do not understand a word of his intellectual essays, though my lord declares that I know every thing, that I understand every thing, and have a most profound intellect. Ah, dear stepfather, it is a terrible misfortune to be so adored and worshipped as I am; I am supposed to be an angel, who by some rare accident has fallen upon the earth."

"Truly a misfortune, for which all other women would envy you," said the major, laughing.

"Then they would make a great mistake," sighed Camilla. "I for my part am weary of this homage; I have no desire to be, I will not consent to be an angel; I wish only to be a beautiful, rich young woman and to enjoy my life. Do what I will, my husband looks at every act of folly from an ideal stand-point, and finds thus new material for worship; he will force me at last to some wild, insane act in order to convince him that I am no angel, but a weak child of earth."

"You were almost in the act of committing such a folly this evening," said her mother, sternly.

"Ah, you mean that I wished to dance. But only think, mamma, with whom I wished to dance, with my cousin, whom all the world calls 'the handsome Kindar,' and who dances so gloriously, that it is a delight to see him, and bliss to float about with him. He only returned this evening, and he came at once to me and greeted me so

lovingly, so tenderly; you know, mamma, we have always loved each other fondly. When I told him I was married, he turned pale and looked at me so sorrowfully, and tears were in his eyes. Oh, mamma, why was I obliged to wed Lord Elliot, who is so grave, so wise, so learned, so virtuous, and with whom it is ever wearisome? Why did you not let me wait till Kindar returned, who is so handsome, so gay, so ignorant, before whom I should never have been forced to blush, no matter how foolish I had been, and with whom I should never have been weary?"

"But how did you know that the handsome Kindar wished to marry you?" said Louise, laughing.

"Oh, yes, mamma, I knew it well; he has often told me so, even when I was a little girl and he was a cadet. This dreadful war is the cause of all my misery; it led to his promotion, then he must join his regiment; then, alas! I must marry another before his return."

"Yes, but a noble, intellectual, and honorable cavalier, who does honor to your choice," said Du Trouffle.

"Lord Elliot has red hair, squints with both eyes, and is so long and meagre that he looks more like an exclamation-point than a man. When he appears before me in his yellow-gray riding costume, I am always reminded of the great *windspeil* you gave me once, stepfather, who had such long, high legs, I used to creep under them; and when he lies like a *windspeil* at my feet, and squints at me, his eyes seem tied up in knots, and I never know if he is really looking at me, or is about to fall into a swoon. Now, stepfather, do you not find that Lord Elliot does honor to my taste?"

"Certainly, and all the more because your choice proves that you appreciate the true dignity and beauty of a man, and his outward appearance seems to you comparatively insignificant."

"Alas, alas! now you begin also to attribute noble and exalted motives to me," said Camilla pathetically. "No, no, stepfather, I am not so sublime as you think, and I should not have married Lord Elliot if mamma and myself had not both indulged the ardent wish to be released from each other. Mamma is too young and too beautiful to be willing to have a grown-up daughter who is not ugly by her side, and I was too old to be locked up any longer in the nursery, so I stepped literally from the nursery to the altar, and became the wife of Lord Elliot; so mamma and myself were freed from the presence of each other, and I thought that a time of joy and liberty would bloom for me. But, alas, I have only changed my cage; formerly I was confined in a nursery, now my prison is a temple, because my husband says I am too elevated, too angelic to come in contact with the pitiful world. Ah, I long so for the world;

I am so thirsty for its pleasures, I would so gladly take full draughts of joy from its golden cup! My husband comes and offers me a crystal shell, filled with heavenly dew and ether dust, which is, I suppose, angels' food, but he does not remark that I am hungering and thirsting to death. Like King Midas, before whose thirsty lips every thing turned to gold, and who was starving in the midst of all his glory, I beseech you, stepfather, undertake the *rôle* of the barber, bore a hole and cry out in it that I have ass's ears—ears as long as those of King Midas. Perhaps the rushes would grow again and make known to my lord the simple fact, which up to this time he refuses to believe, that I am indeed no angel, and he would cease to worship me, and allow me to be gay and happy upon the earth like every other woman. But come, come, stepfather, I hear the earnest voice of my husband in conversation with my merry, handsome cousin. Let us go to meet them, and grant me the pleasure of introducing Lord Elliot to you—not here, but in the brilliantly-lighted saloon. Afterward I will ask you, on your word of honor, if you still find I have made a happy choice, and if my *windspeil* of a husband is of more value than my handsome cousin?"

She took the arm of the major with a gay smile, and tried to draw him forward.

"But your mother," said Du Trouffle, "you forget your mother?"

"Listen now, mamma, how cruel he is, always reminding you that you are my mother; that is as much as to say to you, in other words, that you will soon be a grandmother. Mamma, I could die of laughter to think of you as a grandmother. I assure you, mamma, that in the midst of all my sorrows and disappointments this thought is the only thing which diverts and delights me. Only think, I shall soon make you a worthy grandmother. Say now, grandmother, will you come with us?"

"No, I will remain here, your gayety has made me sad—I do not feel fit for society. I will await my husband here, and we will return to Berlin."

"Adieu, then, mamma," said Camilla, rapidly drawing the major onward.

Louise du Trouffle remained alone in the grotto; she leaned her head against the palm-tree, and looked sorrowfully after the retreating form of her daughter. It seemed to her that a shudder passed through her soul; that a cold, dead hand was laid upon her heart, as if a phantom pressed against her, and a voice whispered "This is thy work. Oh, mother worthy of execration, you alone have caused the destruction of your daughter; through you that soul is lost, which God intrusted to you, and which was endowed with the germ of great and noble qualities. It was your duty to nourish and

build them up. God will one day call you to account, and ask this precious soul of you, which you have poisoned by your evil example, which is lost—lost through you alone."

Louise shuddered fearfully, then rousing herself she tried to shake off these fearful thoughts, and free herself from the stern voices which mastered her. They had so often spoken, so often awaked her in the middle of the night, driven sleep from her couch, and tortured her conscience with bitter reproaches!

Louise knew well this gray phantom which was ever behind her or at her side; ever staring at her with dark and deadly earnestness, even in the midst of her mirth and joyousness; the harsh voice was often so loud that Louise was bewildered by it, and could not hear the ring of joy and rapture which surrounded her. She knew that this pale spectre was conscience; press it down as she would, the busy devil was ever mounting, mounting. But she would not listen, she rushed madly on after new distractions, new pleasures; she quenched the warning voice under shouts of mirth and levity; she threw herself in the arms of folly and worldly pleasures, and then for long months she escaped this threatening phantom, which, with raised finger, stood behind her, which seemed to chase her, and from which she ever fled to new sins and new guilt. Sometimes she had a feeling as if Death held her in his arms, and turned her round in a wild and rapid dance, not regarding her prayers, or her panting, gasping breath; she would, oh how gladly, have rested; gladly have laid down in some dark and quiet corner, away from this wild gayety. But she could not escape from those mysterious arms which held her captive in their iron clasp, which rushed onward with her in the death-dance of sin. She must go onward, ever onward, in this career of vice; she must ever again seek intoxication in the opium of sin, to save herself from the barren, colorless nothingness which awaited her; from that worst of all evils, the weariness with which the old coquette paints the terrible future, in which even she can no longer please; in which old age with a cruel hand sweeps away the flowers from the hair and the crimson from the cheek, and points out to the mocking world the wrinkles on the brow and the ashes in the hair.

"It is cold here," said Louise, shuddering, and springing up quickly from the grass-plot—"it is cold here, and lonely; I will return to the saloon. Perhaps—"

Hasty steps drew near, and a voice whispered her name. Madame du Trouffle drew back, and a glowing blush suffused her cheek, and as she advanced from the grotto she was again the gay, imperious coquette—the beautiful woman, with the cloudless brow and the sparkling eyes, which seemed never to have been over-

shadowed by tears. The conscience-stricken, self-accusing mother was again the worldly-wise coquette.

Her name was called the second time, and her heart trembled, she knew not if with joy or horror.

"For God's sake, why have you dared to seek me here? Do you not know that my husband may return at any moment?"

"Your husband is entertaining Prince Henry while the princess dances the first waltz with Count Kalkreuth. All the world is dancing, playing, and chatting, and, while looking at the prince and princess, have for one moment forgotten the beautiful Louise du Trouffle. I alone could not do this, and as I learned from Lady Elliot that you were here, I dared to follow you, and seek in one glance a compensation for what I have endured this day. Ah, tell me, worshipped lady, must I be forever banished from your presence."

The words of the young man would have seemed insincere and artificial to every unprejudiced ear, but they filled the heart of the vain Louise du Trouffle with joy; they convinced her that she was yet beautiful enough to excite admiration.

"All will be well, Emil," said she; "I have convinced my husband that I am wise as Cato and virtuous as Lucretia. He believes in me, and will cast all slander from his door. Remain here, and let me return alone to the saloon. *Au revoir, mon ami.*"

She threw him a kiss from the tips of her rosy fingers, and hastened away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING IN SANS-SOUCI.

THE ceremonies and festivities of the reception were ended. The king could at length indulge himself in that quiet and repose which he had so long vainly desired. At length, he who had lived so many years to perform the duties of a king, who had in reality lived for his country, might after so many cares and sorrows seek repose. The warrior and hero might once more become the philosopher; might once more enjoy with his friends the pleasure of science and art.

The king entered the carriage which was to bear him to Sans-Souci with a beaming countenance—his deeply-loved Sans-Souci, which had seemed a golden dream to him during the dreary years of the war—a bright goal before him, of which it consoled and strengthened him even to think. Now he would again behold it; now he would again enter those beautiful rooms, and the past would once more become a reality.

He seemed enraptured with the road which led him to Sans-Souci. Every tree, every stone appeared to welcome him, and when the palace became visible, he was entirely overcome by his emotions, and sank back in his carriage with closed eyes.

The Marquis d'Argens, however, the only one who had been allowed to accompany the king in this drive, sprang from his seat, and waving his hat in greeting, exclaimed:

"I greet you, Sans-Souci, you temple of wisdom and happiness! Open wide your portals, for your lord is returning to you. Let your walls resound as did Memnon's pillar, when the sun's rays first greeted it, after a long night. Your night is passed, Sans-Souci; you will be again warmed by the sunbeams from your master's eyes!"

The king smilingly drew his enthusiastic friend back to his seat.

"You are, and always will be a child—an overgrown child."

"Sire," said D'Argens, "that is because I am pious. It is written, 'If you do not become as little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven!' Now, Sans-Souci is my kingdom! I have become as the children, that I might be received at the side of my king, and begin once more the days of happiness."

The king gently shook his head. "Oh, I fear, my friend, that the days of happiness will not recommence; the sun which once illumined Sans-Souci has set. Our lips have forgotten how to smile, and joy is dead in our hearts. How many illusions, how many hopes and wishes I still indulged, when I last descended the steps of Sans-Souci; how poor, and weak, and depressed I shall feel in ascending them!"

"What? your majesty poor! You who return so rich in fame, crowned with imperishable laurels?"

"Ah, marquis, these laurels are bathed in blood, and paid for bitterly and painfully with the lives of many thousands of my subjects. The wounds are still gaping which my land received during the war, and they will require long years to heal. Do not speak to me of my laurels; fame is but cold and sorrowful food! In order to prize fame, one should lay great weight on the judgment of men; I have lost all faith in them. Too many bitter experiences have at length destroyed my faith and confidence. I can no longer love mankind, for I have ever found them small, miserable, and crafty. Those for whom I have done most have betrayed and deceived me the most deeply. Think of Chafgotch, he whom I called friend, and who betrayed me in the hour of danger! Remember Warkotch, whom I preferred to so many others, whom I overloaded with proofs of my love, and who wished to betray and murder me! Think of the many attempts against my life, which were always undertaken

by those whom I had trusted and benefited! Think of these things, marquis, and then tell me if I should still love and trust mankind!"

"It is true, sire," said the marquis, sadly; "your majesty has had a wretched experience, and mankind must appear small to you, who are yourself so great. The eagle which soars proudly toward the sun, must think the world smaller and smaller, the higher he soars; the objects which delight us poor earth-worms, who are grovelling in the dust, and mistake an atom floating in the sunshine for the sun itself, must indeed appear insignificant to you."

"Do not flatter me, marquis! Let us, when together, hear a little of that truth which is so seldom heard among men, and of which the name is scarcely known to kings. You flattered me, because you had not the courage to answer my question concerning the unworthiness of mankind, when I said I could no longer love or trust them! You feel, however, that I am right, and you will know how to pardon me, when I appear to the world as a cold, hard-hearted egotist. It is true my heart has become hardened in the fire of many and deep sufferings! I loved mankind very dearly, marquis; perhaps that is the reason I now despise them so intensely; because I know they are not worthy of my love!"

"But, sire, you love them still; for your heart is possessed of that Godlike quality—mercy—which overlooks and pardons the faults and failings of mankind. Intolerance is not in the nature of my king, and forgiveness and mercy are ever on his lips."

"I will endeavor to verify your words, dear friend," said the king, offering D'Argens his hand. "And should I not succeed, you must forgive me, and remember how deeply I have suffered, and that my heart is hardened by the scars of old wounds. But I will indulge such sad thoughts no longer. Only look how Sans-Souci gleams before us! Every window which glitters in the sunlight seems to greet me with shining eyes, and the whispering leaves appear to bid me welcome. There are the windows of my library, and behind them await the great spirits of my immortal friends, who look at me and shake their gray heads at the weak child who has returned to them old and bowed down. Cæsar looks smilingly at the laurels I have brought, and Virgil shakes his curly locks, and lightly hums one of his divine songs, which are greater than all my victories. Come, marquis, come! we will go, in all modesty and humility to these gifted spirits, and entreat them not to despise us, because we are so unlike them."

As the carriage reached the lowest terrace, Frederick sprang out with the elasticity of youth, and began to ascend the steps so lightly and rapidly, that the marquis could scarcely follow him.

From time to time the king stood still, and gazed around him,

and then a bright smile illumined his countenance, and his eyes beamed with pleasure. Then hastening onward, he turned his head toward the house that looked so still and peaceful, and seemed, with its open doors, ready to welcome him.

At length, having reached the summit, he turned once more with beaming eyes to look at the lovely landscape which was spread before him in smiling luxuriousness. He then hastily entered the house and the beautiful room in which he had spent so many gay and happy hours with his friends. Now his footsteps echoed in the lonely room, and none of his friends were there to welcome the returning king—none but D'Argens, the dearest, the most faithful of all.

The king now turned to him, and a shadow overspread his countenance, which had been so bright.

"D'Argens," he said, "we are very poor; the most of our friends have left us forever. The prior of Sans-Souci has returned, but his monks have all left him but you, marquis!"

"Does your majesty forget my Lord Marshal, the most amiable and intellectual of your monks? It needs but a sign from his beloved prior to recall him from Neufchatel!"

"It is true," said the king, smiling; "I am not so deserted as I thought. Lord Marshal must return to us, and he must live here in Sans-Souci, as you will. I must surround myself with those who deserve my confidence; perhaps, then, I can forget how bitterly I have been deceived by others. Come, marquis, give me your arm, and we will make a tour of these rooms."

He placed his hand upon the arm of the marquis, and they passed through the silent, deserted rooms, which seemed to greet the king with a thousand remembrances. Perhaps it was that he might the more distinctly hear the whispers of memory that he had commanded that no one should receive him in Sans-Souci, that no servant should appear until called for. Without noise or ceremony, he desired to take possession of this house, in which he had not been the king, but the philosopher and poet. He wished to return here, at least, as if he had only yesterday left the house. But the seven years of care and sorrow went with him; they crept behind him into these silent, deserted halls. He recognized them in the faded furniture, in the dusty walls, and in the darkened pictures. They were not merely around, but within him, and he again felt how utterly he had changed in these years.

As they entered the room which Voltaire had occupied, Frederick's countenance was again brightened by a smile, while that of the marquis assumed a dark and indignant expression.

"Ah, marquis, I see from your countenance that you are ac-

quainted with all the monkey-tricks of my immortal friend," said the king, gayly; "and you are indignant that so great a genius as Voltaire should have possessed so small a soul! You think it very perfidious in Voltaire to have joined my enemies when I was in trouble, and then to send me his congratulations if I happened to win a victory!"

"Does your majesty know that also?" asked the astonished marquis.

"Dear marquis, have we not always good friends and servants, who take a pleasure in telling bad news, and informing us of those things which they know it will give us pain to hear? Even kings have such friends, and mine eagerly acquainted me with the fact that Voltaire wished all manner of evil might befall his friend 'Luc,' as it pleased him to call me. Did he not write to D'Argental that he desired nothing more fervently than my utter humiliation and the punishment of my sins, on the same day on which he sent me an enthusiastic poem, written in honor of my victory at Leuthen? Did he not write on another occasion to Richelieu, that the happiest day of his life would be that on which the French entered Berlin as conquerors, and destroyed the capital of the treacherous king who dared to write to him twice every month the tenderest and most flattering things, without dreaming of reinstating him as chamberlain with the pension of six thousand thalers? He wished that I might suffer '*la damnation éternelle,*' and proudly added. '*Vous voyez, que dans la tragédie je veux toujours que le crime soit puni.*'"

"Yes," replied D'Argens, "and at the same time he wrote here to Formay: '*Votre roi est toujours un homme unique, étonnant, inimitable; il fait des vers charmants dans de temps où un autre ne pourrait faire un ligne de prose, il mérite d'être heureux.*'"

The king laughed aloud. "Well, and what does that prove, that Voltaire is the greatest and most unprejudiced of poets?"

"That proves, sire, that he is a false, perfidious man, a faithless, ungrateful friend. All his great poetical gifts weigh as nothing in the scale against the weakness and wickedness of his character. I can no longer admire him as a poet, because I despise him so utterly as a man."

"You are too hard, marquis," said Frederick, laughing. "Voltaire has a great mind, but a small heart, and that is, after all, less his fault than his Creator's. Why should we wish to punish him, when he is innocent? Why should we demand of a great poet that he shall be a good man? We will allow him to have a bad heart, he can account to Madame Denis for that; and if we cannot love him, we can at least admire him as a poet. We can forgive much wickedness in men, if it is redeemed by great virtues."

"Ah, sire, that is very sad," sad D'Argens, "and could only be uttered by one who had the most profound love or the greatest contempt for mankind."

"Perhaps the two are combined in me," said the king. "As Christ said of the Magdalen, 'She has loved much, much will be forgiven her,' so let us say of Voltaire. He has written much, much will be forgiven him. He has lately rendered an immortal service, for which I could almost love him, were it possible to love him at all. He undertook with bold courage the defence of the unhappy Jean Calas, who was murdered by fanatical French priests. The priests, perhaps, will condemn him; we, however, honor him."

"Did not your majesty do the same thing?" asked D'Argens. "Did you not also take pity on the unhappy family of Jean Calas? Did you not send them a considerable amount of money and offer them an asylum in your dominions?"

"That I did, certainly; but what is that in comparison with what Voltaire has done? He gave them the strength of his mind and his work, his best possession, while I could only give them gold. Voltaire's gift was better, more beautiful, and I will now take a vow for his sake, that the persecuted and oppressed shall always find aid and protection in my land, and that I will consider liberty of spirit a sacred thing as long as I live. Freedom of thought shall be a right of my subjects. I will call all free and liberal-minded persons to come to me, for liberty of thought brings liberty of will, and I prefer to rule a thinking people, to a mass of thoughtless slaves, who follow me through stupid obedience. Prussia shall be the land of liberty and enlightenment. The believers and the unbelievers, the pietists and the atheists may speak alike freely; the spirit of persecution shall be forever banished from Prussia."

"Amen," cried D'Argens solemnly, as he glanced at the excited, beaming countenance of the king. "The spirit of love and of freedom hears your words, my king, and they will be written with a diamond-point in the history of Prussia."

"And now, marquis," said the king, "we will visit my library, and then we will repose ourselves that we may enjoy our meal. In the evening I invite you to the concert. My musicians are coming from Berlin; and we will see if my lips, which have been accustomed so long to rough words of discipline, are capable of producing a few sweet notes from my flute."

Thus speaking, the king took the arm of the marquis, and they passed slowly through the room, whose desolate silence made them both sad.

"The world is nothing more than a great, gaping grave, on the brink of which we walk with wild courage," said the king,

softly. "There is no moment that some one does not stumble at our side and fall into the abyss, and we have the courage to continue in the path until our strength fails and we sink, making room for another. Almost all of those who formerly occupied these rooms have vanished. How long will it be ere I shall follow them?"

"May that wretched moment be very distant!" exclaimed D'Argens, with a trembling voice. "Your majesty is still so young and full of life—you have nothing to do with death."

"No," said the king; "I am very old, for I have become indifferent to the world. Things which would have deeply distressed me formerly, now pass unheeded over my soul. I assure you, marquis, I have made great progress in practical philosophy. I am old; I stand at the limits of life, and my soul is freeing itself from this world, which, it is to be hoped, I will soon leave."

"Ah, sire," said D'Argens, smiling, "you are ten years younger than I am, and each time that you speak of your rapidly advancing age, I ask myself how it is possible that a man so much younger than I should complain of old age. Only wait, sire; here, in the quiet of Sans-Souci, in a few months you will feel ten and I fifteen years younger. In the happiness and comforts of our existence, you will live to the age of Abraham and I to that of Jacob."

"But I am much older than you, marquis. During the last seven years, I have had nothing but destroyed hopes, undeserved misfortunes, in short, all that the caprice of Fortune could discover to distress me. After such experiences it is allowable, when one is fifty years old, to say that he is old, that he will no longer be the plaything of Fortune, that he renounces ambition and all those follies which are merely the illusions of inexperienced youth. But no more of these sad thoughts, for here we are at last at the door of my *tusculum*. Fold your hands, you unbelieving son of the Church; the gods and heroes await us in this temple, and you will at least believe in these."

They entered the library, and as the door closed behind them and they were separated from the whole world, as they stood in the centre of the room whose only ornament consisted of rows of books, upon which glittered in golden letters the names of the great minds of all ages, whose only splendor consisted in the marble busts of Cæsar and Virgil, of Cicero and Alexander, the king said, with beaming eyes:

"I am at last in the republic of minds, and I, as a humble citizen, approach the great presidents, who look down so graciously upon me."

And, as the king seated himself in his arm-chair before his writing-table, he recovered his sparkling humor, his gay wit, and re-

counted with a bright smile to the marquis that he intended to work most industriously, that he would certainly write a history of this war which he had just closed, and that he intended always to live at Sans-Souci, as its quiet and repose seemed more agreeable to him than the noise and turmoil of the great city. He then dismissed the marquis for a short time, that he might rest before going to the table.

But the king did not rest. Too many and too powerful thoughts were surging in his breast. Leaning back in his arm-chair, he thought of the future. He recalled his own life and arranged his future course. After sitting thus for a long time, he suddenly arose, his countenance bright with a firm and energetic expression.

"Yes, thus it shall be," he said aloud. "I will be the father of my people. I will live for them, forgetting the wickedness of men, or only avenging myself on them by the prickings of a needle. I have no family, therefore my people shall be my family. I have no children, therefore every one who needs my aid shall become my child, and for them I will do the duties of a father. My country bleeds from a thousand wounds—to heal these wounds shall be the task of my life."

True to this resolution, the king called together his ministers the next day, and commanded them to obtain exact accounts of the condition of his provinces; to inform him of the wants and necessities of the people; and to assist him in relieving them. True to this resolution, the king was untiring in his work for the good of his people. He wished to see all, to prove all. He desired to be the source from which his subjects received all their strength and power. Therefore he must know all their griefs—he must lend an open ear to all their demands.

His first command was, that any one who asked for an interview should be admitted. And when one of his ministers dared to express his astonishment at this order, "It is the duty of a king," said Frederick, "to listen to the request of the most insignificant of his subjects. I am a regent for the purpose of making my people happy. I do not dare close my ears to their complaints." And he listened sympathizingly to the sorrows of his people, and his whole mind and thoughts were given to obtain their alleviation. He was always willing to aid with his counsel and his strength. Untiring in the work, he read every letter, every petition, and examined every answer which was written by his cabinet council. He and he alone, was the soul of his government.

A new life began to reign in this land, of which he was the soul. He worked more than all of his ministers or servants, and music and science were his only pleasure and recreation. He was a hero

in peace as well as in war. He did not require, as others do, the distraction of gay pleasures. Study was his chief recreation—conversation with his friends was his greatest pleasure. Even the hunt, the so-called "knightly pleasure," had no charms for him.

"Hunting," said the king, "is one of the senseless pleasures which excites the body but leaves the mind unemployed. We are more cruel than the wild beasts themselves. He who can murder an innocent animal in cold blood, would find it impossible to show mercy to his fellow-man. Is hunting a proper employment for a thinking creature? A gentleman who hunts can only be forgiven if he does so rarely, and then to distract his thoughts from sad and earnest business matters. It would be wrong to deny sovereigns all relaxation, but is there a greater pleasure for a monarch than to rule well, to enrich his state, and to advance all useful sciences and arts? He who requires other enjoyments is to be pitied."

CHAPTER V.

THE ENGRAVED CUP.

PRINCESS AMELIA was alone in her boudoir—she was ever alone. She lay upon the sofa, gazed at the ceiling, and in utter despair reflected upon her miserable fate. For years she had looked anxiously forward to the conclusion of this unhappy war in which Austria and Prussia were so fiercely opposed. So long as they were active enemies, Trenck must remain a prisoner. But she had said to herself, "When peace is declared, the prisoners of war will be released, and Maria Theresa will demand that her captain, Frederick von Trenck, be set at liberty."

Peace had been declared four months, and Trenck still lay in his subterranean cell at Magdeburg. All Europe was freed from the fetters of war. Trenck alone was unpardoned and forgotten. This thought made Amelia sad unto death, banished sleep from her couch, and made her a restless, despairing wanderer during the day.

Amelia had no longer an object—the last ray of hope was extinguished Peace had been concluded and Trenck was forgotten! God had denied her the happiness of obtaining Trenck's freedom; He would not even grant her the consolation of seeing him released through others. For nine years Trenck had languished in prison—for nine years Amelia's only thought, only desire, was to enable him to escape. Her life was consecrated to this one object. She thought not of the gold she had sacrificed—she had offered up not only her entire private fortune, but had made debts which her in-

come was utterly inadequate to meet. Money had no value except as it was consecrated to her one great aim. She felt now that her heart had been crushed and broken in her useless efforts—that her hopes were trampled in the dust, and her existence worthless. Peace had visited all hearts but hers with new assurance of hope. It brought to her nothing but despair and desolation. While all others seemed to recommence life with fresh courage and confidence, Amelia withdrew to her apartments, brooding in dark discontent—hating all those who laughed and were glad—spurning from her with angry jealousy the contented and happy. The world was to her a vast tomb, and she despised all those who had the mad and blasphemous courage to dance on its brink.

Amelia avenged herself on those who avoided her, by pursuing them with spiteful jests and bitter sarcasm, hoping in this way to be relieved wholly from their presence. She wished to be alone and always alone. Her soul within her was desolate, and the outward world should take the same dark hue. She lived like a prisoner secluded in her own apartments; and when some great court festival compelled her to appear in public, she revenged herself by wounding all who approached her. The sufferings of others were a balsam to her heart, and she convinced herself that the pain she inflicted assuaged her own torments.

Amelia was alone; her maid of honor had just read aloud one of Molière's biting, satirical comedies, and received leave of absence for a few hours. The princess had also dismissed her chamberlain till dinner, and he had left the castle; only two pages waited in the anteroom, which was separated by two chambers from the boudoir. Amelia had the happy consciousness of being alone in her grief, and, fearing no disturbance, she could sigh and lament aloud. She dared give words to her rage and her despair; there were no other listeners than these dead, voiceless walls—they had been long her only confidants. The stillness was suddenly broken by a gentle knock at the door, and one of the pages entered.

With a frightened look, and begging earnestly to be pardoned for having dared to disturb the princess, he informed her that a stranger was without, who pleaded eagerly to be admitted.

"What does he wish?" said Amelia, roughly. "I have neither office nor dignity to bestow, and, at present, I have no money! Tell him this, and he will go away cheerfully."

"The stranger says he is a jeweller, your highness," said the page. "It is of great importance to him that you should look at his collection of gems; and if you will have the goodness to purchase a few trifles, you will make them the fashion in Berlin, and thus make his fortune."

"Tell him he is a fool!" said Amelia, with a coarse laugh; "I have no desire to see his jewels! Dismiss him, and do not dare disturb me again. Well, why do you hesitate? Why are you still here?"

"Ah, princess, the poor man begs so earnestly for admittance; he says your highness knew him at Magdeburg, and that the governor, the Landgrave of Hesse, expressly charged him to show the jewels to your highness."

These magical words aroused Amelia from her apathy. With a quick movement she arose from the sofa; she was endowed with new energy and vitality; she advanced toward the door, then paused, and looked silent and thoughtful.

"Admit the stranger!" said she, "I will see his treasures."

The page left the room, and Amelia gazed after him breathlessly, and with a loudly-beating heart. It seemed to her an eternity before the stranger entered.

A tall, slender man, in simple but elegant costume, approached. He stood at the door, and bowed profoundly to the princess. Amelia looked at him steadily, and sighed deeply; she did not know this man. Again her hopes had deceived her.

"You said the Landgrave of Hesse sent you to me?" said she, roughly.

"Yes, princess," said the man; "he commanded me to seek your highness as soon as I arrived in Berlin, and show you my collection, in order that you might have the privilege of selecting before all others."

Amelia looked once more questioningly and fiercely upon the stranger, but he remained cold and indifferent.

"Well, sir, show me your gems!"

He placed a large casket upon a table in the middle of the room; he then unlocked it, and threw back the lid. In the different compartments, splendid jewels of wondrous beauty were to be seen—rings, pins, bracelets, and necklaces of rare workmanship and design.

"Diamonds," cried Amelia, contemptuously; "nothing but diamonds!"

"But diamonds of a strange fire and wondrous design," said the strange jeweller. "Will not your highness graciously draw nearer, and observe them?"

"I have no use for them; I wear no diamonds!" said Amelia: "if you have nothing else to show me, close the casket; I shall make no purchase."

"I have, indeed, other and rarer treasures; some beautiful carved work, by Cellini, some ivory carving of the middle ages, and a few

rare and costly cameos. Perhaps these may please the taste of your highness?"

The jeweller raised the first compartment, and taking out a number of beautiful and costly articles, he laid them upon the table, explained the workmanship and design of each piece, and called the attention of the princess to their wondrous beauty.

Amelia listened carelessly to his words. These things had no interest for her; she looked only at one object—a round packet, rolled in paper, which the stranger had taken with the other articles from the casket; this must be something particularly costly. It was carefully wrapped in silk paper, while every thing else lay confusedly together, and yet this seemed the only treasure which the jeweller did not seem disposed to exhibit. Amelia, however, remarked that he raised this mysterious packet several times, as if it was in his way; changed its place, but every time brought it nearer to her. It now lay immediately in front of her.

"What does that paper contain?" said she.

"Oh, that has no interest for your royal highness; that is a worthless object! Will you have the goodness to examine this seal? It represents the holy Saint Michael, treading the dragon under his feet, and it is one of the most successful and beautiful works of Benvenuto Cellini."

Amelia did not look at the seal; she stretched out her hand toward the mysterious packet, and giving a searching look at the jeweller, she raised and opened it.

"A cup! a tin cup!" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

"As I remarked to your highness, a worthless object; unless the rare beauty of the workmanship should give it some value. The carving is indeed beautiful and most wonderful, when you know that it was done with a common nail, and not even in daylight, but in the gloom and darkness of a subterranean cell."

Amelia trembled so violently, that the cup almost fell from her hand. The stranger did not remark her emotion, but went on quietly.

"Observe, your highness, how finely and correctly the outlines are drawn; it is as artistically executed as the copperplate of a splendid engraving. It is greatly to be regretted that we cannot take impressions from this tin cup; they would make charming pictures. The sketches are not only well executed, but they are thoughtfully and pathetically conceived and illustrated with beautiful verses, which are worthy of a place in any album. If your highness takes any interest in such trifles, I beg you will take this to the light and examine it closely."

The princess did not answer: she stepped to the window, and turning her back to the jeweller, looked eagerly at the cup.

It was, indeed, a masterpiece of art and industry. The surface was divided by small and graceful arabesques into ten departments, each one of which contained an enchanting and finely-executed picture. No chisel could have drawn the lines more correctly or artistically, or produced a finer effect of light and shade. Under each picture there was a little verse engraved in such fine characters, that they could only be deciphered with difficulty.

Amelia's eyes seemed to have recovered the strength and power of earlier days. A youthful, vigorous soul lay in the glance which was fixed upon this cup; she understood every thing.

There was a cage with an imprisoned bird; beneath this a verse:

"Ce n'est pas un moineau,
Gardé dans cette cage,
C'est un de ces oiseaux,
Qui chantent dans l'orage.
Ouvrez, amis des sages,
Brisez fers et verroux;
Les chants dans vos bocages,
Rejailliront pour vous." *

In the next compartment was again a cage, containing a bird, and on the branch of a tree under which the cage was placed, perched another bird, with fluttering wings and open beak; underneath was written—

"Le rossignol chante, voici la raison,
Pourquoi il est pris pour chanter en prison;
Voyez le moineau qui fait tant de dommage,
Jouir de la vie sans craindre la cage.
Voilà un portrait,
Qui montre l'effet
Du bonheur des fripons du désastre des sages." *

Amelia could not control herself; she could look no longer. She rarely wept, but now her eyes were filled with tears. They fell upon the cup, as if to kiss the letters which had recalled so many touching and sad remembrances. But she had no time for tears, she must read on! With an involuntary movement, she dashed the tears from her eyes, and fixed them steadily upon the cup.

Here was another picture. In a cell lay a skeleton form, the hands and the feet bound with heavy chains. The figure had raised itself slightly from the straw bed and gazed with an agonized expression at the grating in the wall, behind which the grim-bearded face of a soldier was seen, who, with wide-open mouth seemed to

* See note, page 572.

be calling angrily to the prisoner. Beneath this stood some verses in German.*

"Oh fearful! most fearful!" sobbed Amelia; and, completely overcome, her head sank upon her breast. She cared not that the strange jeweller saw her tears and heard the despairing cry of her heart; she had nothing to fear; she had no more to lose. The assembled world might hear and see her great grief. But no, no; this must not be. His agony, his tortures, might perhaps be increased to punish her through him! She must not weep; she must not complain. Trenck lived; although in prison and in chains, he still lived; so long as he lived, she must conquer the despair of her heart.

As she thought thus, she dried her tears, and raised her head with proud resolve. She would be calm and self-possessed; perhaps this man, sent to her by the landgrave, had something still to say to her. She half turned her head toward him; he appeared not to be thinking of her, but was quietly engaged placing his treasures again in his casket.

"Can you tell me who engraved this cup?"

"Certainly, your royal highness. A poor prisoner, who has been confined for nine years in a subterranean cell in the fortress of Magdeburg, engraved it. He is called Frederick von Trenck. Your highness has perhaps never heard the name, but in Magdeburg every child knows it, and speaks it with wonder and admiration! No one has seen him, but every one knows of his daring, his heroism, his unfaltering courage, and endurance, his herculean strength, and his many and marvellous attempts to escape. Trenck is the hero of the nursery as well as the saloon. No lady in Magdeburg is acquainted with him, but all are enthusiastic in his praise, and all the officers who know him love and pity him. Many are ready to risk their lives for him!"

The princess sighed deeply, and a ray of joy and hope lighted up her countenance. She listened with suppressed breath to the jeweller's words—they sounded like far-off music, pleasant but mournful to the soul.

The stranger continued: "Some time since, in order to dispel the tediousness of his prison-life, he began to engrave poems and figures upon his tin cup with a nail which he had found in the earth while making his last attempt to undermine the floor of his cell. During one of his visits of observation, the commandant discovered

* See memoirs of Trenck, Thiébault, in which Trenck describes one of these cups and the fate which befell it. One of them was engraved for the Landgrave of Hesse, and in this way fell into the hands of the Emperor Joseph the Second, who kept it in his art cabinet. Another, which had been once in possession of the wife of Frederick the Great, Trenck afterward recovered in Paris. Some of these cups are still to be seen in art collections in Germany, and some are in the museum in Berlin.

this cup; he was delighted with the engravings, took the cup and sent Trenck another, hoping he would continue the exercise of his art. Trenck seized the occasion joyfully, and since then he has been constantly occupied as an engraver. Every officer desires to have a cup engraved by him, as a souvenir. Every lady in Magdeburg longs for one, and prefers it to the most costly jewel. These cups are now the *mode*—indeed, they have become an important article in trade. If one of the officers can be induced to sell his cup, it will cost twenty louis d'or. Trenck gets no money for his work, but he has gained far greater advantages. These cups give him the opportunity of making known to the world the cruel tortures to which he is subject; they have given him speech, and replaced the writing materials of which they have deprived him. They have answered even a better and holier purpose than this," said the jeweller, in a low voice, "they have procured him light and air. In order to give him sufficient light for his work, the officers open the doors into the first corridor, in which there is a large window; one of the upper panes of this window is open every morning. As the days are short in the casemates, the commandant looks through his fingers, when the officers bring lights to the poor prisoner. Trenck feels as if his wretched prison-cell was now changed into the *atelier* of an artist."

Amelia was silent and pressed the cup tenderly to her lips; the stranger did not regard her, but continued his recital quietly.

"An officer of the garrison told me all this, your highness, when he sold me this cup. They make no secret of their admiration and affection for Trenck; they know they would be severely punished if the higher authorities discovered that they allowed Trenck any privileges or alleviations, but they boast of it and consider it a humane action."

"May God reward them for it!" sighed Amelia. "I will buy this cup, sir. I do not wish to be behind the ladies of Magdeburg, and as it is the *mode* to possess a cup engraved by Trenck, I will take this. Name your price."

The jeweller was silent for a moment, then said:

"Pardon me, your highness, I dare not sell you this cup, or rather I implore your highness not to desire it. If possible, I will make it an instrument for Trenck's release."

"How can this be done?" said Amelia, breathlessly.

"I will take this cup to General Riedt, the Austrian ambassador in Berlin. As all the world is interesting itself for Trenck, I do not see why I should not do the same, and endeavor to obtain his release. I shall therefore go to General Riedt with this cup. I am told he is a noble gentleman and a distant relation of Trenck; he cannot fail to sympathize with his unfortunate cousin. When

he hears of his cruel sufferings he will certainly strive to deliver him. General Riedt is exactly the man to effect this great object; he is thoroughly acquainted with all the by-ways and intrigues of the court of Vienna. Maria Theresa classes him among her most trusted confidants and friends. Whoever desires to free Trenck must consult with General Riedt and win him."

Amelia raised her head and looked up quickly at the stranger; his eyes were fixed upon her with a searching and significant expression; their glances met and were steadily fixed for one moment, then a scarcely perceptible smile flitted over the face of the jeweller, and the princess nodded her head. Each felt that they were understood.

"Have you nothing more to say?" said Amelia.

"No, your highness, I have only to beg you will pardon me for not selling you this cup. I must take it to General Riedt."

"Leave it with me," said Amelia, after a few moments' reflection. "I myself will show it to him and seek to interest him in the fate of his unhappy relative. If I succeed, the cup is mine, and you will not wish to sell it to General Riedt. Do you agree to this? Go, then, and return to me at this hour to-morrow, when I will either pay you the price of the cup, or return it to you, if I am so unhappy as to fail."

The jeweller bowed profoundly. "I will punctually obey your highness's commands. To-morrow at this hour I will be here."

The stranger took his casket and left the room. The princess gazed after him till the door closed.

"That man is silent and discreet, I believe he can be trusted," she murmured. "I will write at once, and desire an interview with General Riedt."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCESS AND THE DIPLOMAT.

An hour later the page of the princess announced General von Riedt, Austrian ambassador at the court of Berlin. Amelia advanced to meet him, and gazed with a sharp, piercing glance at the general, who bowed respectfully before her.

"I have sent for you, general," said the princess, "to repair an injury. You have been announced twice, and both times I declined receiving you."

"That was no injury, your royal highness," said the general,

smiling. "I ventured to call on you because etiquette demands that a new ambassador should introduce himself to every member of the royal house. Your royal highness declined to receive me, it was not agreeable, and you were perfectly justifiable in closing your doors against me."

"And now you must wonder why I have sent for you?"

"I never allow myself to wonder. Your order for me to come has made me happy—that is sufficient."

"You have no suspicion why I sent for you?"

"Your royal highness has just informed me you kindly wished to indemnify me for my two former visits."

"You are a good diplomatist; you turn quickly about, are as smooth as an eel, cannot be taken hold of, but slip through one's fingers. I am accustomed to go at once to the point—I cannot diplomatize. See here, why I wished to see you—I wished to show you this cup."

She took the cup hastily from the table, and gave it to the ambassador. He gazed at it long and earnestly; he turned it around, looking at every picture, reading every verse. Amelia watched him keenly, but his countenance betrayed nothing. He was as smiling, as unembarrassed as before. When he had looked at it attentively, he placed it on the table.

"Well, what do you think of the workmanship?" said Amelia.

"It is wonderful, worthy of an artist, your royal highness."

"And do you know by what artist it was made?"

"I suspect it, your royal highness."

"Give me his name?"

"I think he is called Frederick von Trenck."

"It is so, and if I do not err, he is your relative?"

"My distant relative—yes, your royal highness."

"And can you bear to have your relative in chains? Does not your heart bleed for his sufferings?"

"He suffers justly, I presume, or he would not have been condemned."

"Were he the greatest criminal that lived, it would still be a crime to make him suffer perpetually. A man's sleep is sacred, be he a criminal or a murderer. Let them kill the criminal, but they should not murder sleep. Look at this picture, general; look at this prisoner lying upon the hard floor; he has been torn from his dreams of freedom and happiness by the rough voice of the soldier standing at his door. Read the verse beneath it—is not every word of it bathed in tears? Breathes there not a cry of terror throughout so fearful, so unheard-of, that it must resound in every breast? And you, his relative, you will not hear him? You will do nothing

to free this unfortunate man from his prison? You, the Austrian ambassador, suffer an officer of your empress to remain a prisoner in a strange land, without a trial, without a hearing."

"When my empress sent me here, she gave me her instructions, and she informed me of the extent and character of my duties. She did not request me to exert myself for the release of this unfortunate prisoner; that is entirely beyond my sphere of action, and I must be discreet."

"You must be careful and discreet when the life of a man, a relative, is concerned? You have, then, no pity for him?"

"I pity him deeply, your royal highness, but can do nothing more."

"Perhaps not you! Perhaps another! Perhaps I?"

"I do not know if your royal highness interests herself sufficiently in the prisoner to work for him."

"You know not whether I interest myself sufficiently in Trenck to serve him," cried Amelia, with a harsh laugh. "You well know it; the whole world knows it; no one dares speak of it aloud, for fear of the king's anger; but it is whispered throughout the whole land why Trenck languishes in prison. You, you alone, should be ignorant of it! Know, then, that Trenck is imprisoned because I love him! Yes, general, I love him! Why do you not laugh, sir? Is it not laughable to hear an old, wrinkled, broken-down creature speak of love—to see a wan, trembling form, tottering to her grave on a prop of love? Look at this horribly disfigured countenance. Listen to the rough, discordant voice that dares to speak of love, and then laugh, general, for I tell you I love Trenck. I love him with all the strength and passion of a young girl. Grief and age have laid a fearful mask upon my countenance, but my heart is still young, there burns within it an undying, a sacred flame. My thoughts, my desires are passionate and youthful, and my every thought, my every desire is for Trenck. I could tell you of all the agony, all the despair I have endured for his sake, but it would be useless. There is no question of my sufferings, but of his who through me has lost his youth and his freedom—his all! Nine years he has lain in prison; for nine years my one aim has been to release him. My existence, my soul, my heart, are bound up in his prison walls. I only live to release him. Though I have ceased to look for human assistance, my heart still prays earnestly to God for some way of escape. If you know any such, general, show it to me, and were it strewed with thorns and burning irons, I would wander upon it in my bare feet."

She raised her hands and fixed an imploring glance upon the general, who had listened to her in silence. When she had ceased

speaking, he raised his head and looked at her. Amelia could have cried aloud for joy, for two bright, precious tears gleamed in his eye.

"You weep," cried she; "you have some pity."

The general took her hand, and kneeling reverentially before her he said: "Yes, I weep, but not over you. I weep over your great, self-sacrificing soul. I do not pity you—your grief is too great, too sacred—it is above pity. But I bow profoundly before you, for your suffering is worthy of all reverence. To me you appear much more beautiful than all the women of this court who dance giddily through life. It is not the diplomatist but the man who kneels before you and offers you his homage."

Gently Amelia bade him rise. With a sweet, happy smile upon her lip she thanked him for his sympathy, and hoped they would be good friends and counsel with each other.

The general was silent for a few moments. "The feelings of the empress must be worked upon—she must intercede with King Frederick for Trenck. He cannot refuse her first request."

"Will you undertake to effect this?" said Amelia, hastily. "Will you intercede for your unfortunate relative?"

"I had done so long ago had it been possible. Alas, I dared not. Trenck is my relative—my request would, therefore, have been considered as that of a prejudiced person. My exalted empress possesses so strong a sense of right that it has become a rule of hers never to fulfil a request made by any of her own intimate and confidential friends for their families or relatives. She would have paid no attention to my request for Trenck's release. Moreover, I would have made enemies of a powerful and influential party at court—with a party whose wish it is that Trenck may never be released, because he would then come and demand an account of the gold, jewels, and property left him by his cousin, the colonel of the pandours, thus causing a great disturbance amongst several noble families at court. These families are continually filling the ear of the empress with acccusations against the unfortunate prisoner, well knowing that he cannot defend himself. You must appear to have forgotten that poor Trenck is languishing in prison while his property is being guarded by stewards who pay themselves for their heavy labor with the old colonel's money. It is dangerous, therefore, to meddle with this wasp's nest. To serve Trenck, the interceder must be so harmless and insignificant that no one will consider it worth while to watch him, so that Trenck's enemies, not suspecting him, can place no obstacles in his path."

"Lives there such a one?" said the princess.

"Yes, your royal highness."

"Where is he? What is his name? What is he?"

"The fireman in the apartments of the empress. He is a poor Savoyard, without name, without rank, without position, but with credit and influence."

"A fireman?" cried the princess, with amazement.

"An old, ugly, deformed fellow, called by the other servants Gnome because of his stubborn silence, his want of sociability, his rough manner and voice, his caring for nothing but his service, which he performs with great method. Every morning at six he enters her majesty's apartment, makes the fire, throws back the curtain to admit the light, arranges the chairs, and then withdraws without the least noise. All this he does without committing the slightest indiscretion; always the same; never lingering beyond his time—never leaving before. He is like a clock that maintains always the same movement and sound. The empress, accustomed for thirty years to see him enter daily her apartments, has become used to his homeliness, and often in the kindness of her heart enters into conversation with him. His answers are always laconic, in a tone of perfect indifference—at times *brusque*, even harsh—but they have a sensible and often a deep meaning. When the empress speaks with him, he does not cease his work for a moment, and when he has finished he does not remain a minute longer, but goes without asking if she desires to continue the conversation. For thirty years he has had the same duties and has fulfilled them in the same manner. He has never been accused of a mistake—he has never been guilty of inquisitiveness or intrigue. Thus the empress has great and firm confidence in him. She is so convinced of his truth, disinterestedness, and probity, that he has gained a sort of influence over her, and as she knows that he is to be won neither by gold, flattery, promises of position and rank, she constantly asks his opinion on matters of importance, and not seldom is biassed by its strong, sensible tone."

"But if this man is so honest and disinterested, how are we to influence him?"

"We must seek to win his heart and his head. He must become interested in the fate of the unfortunate prisoner—he must become anxious for his release. When we have done this much, we can question his self-interest and offer him gold."

"Gold? This wonder of probity and truth is susceptible to bribes?"

"He never has, perhaps never may be. He himself has no desires, no necessities; but he has one weakness—his daughter. She is a young and lovely girl, whom he, in his dark distrust of all at court in the form of men, has had educated in a convent far from

Vienna. She is now living with some respectable family in Vienna, but she never visits him, never enters the castle to inquire for him for fear she should be seen by some of the court gentlemen. This girl has now formed an attachment to a young doctor. They would like to marry, but he has no practice, she no money. Her father has saved nothing, but spent all his wages on her education, and has no dowry for his daughter."

"And he intends to plead with the empress for this dower?"

"If such a thought came to him he would put it away with contempt, for his only ambition consists in making no requests, receiving no gifts from the empress. Nor would he now act for this gold alone contrary to his idea of right, were his daughter to die of sorrow. As I said before, his heart and head must first be won, then only must we speak of reward."

"If this man has a heart, we cannot fail to win it when we tell him all that Trenck has suffered and still endures," cried the princess. "The agony and despair that have been heaped upon the head of one poor mortal will surely touch both head and heart. When we have succeeded, we will give his daughter a handsome dower. God has so willed it that I am right rich now, and can fulfil my promises. My pension as abbess and my salary as princess were both paid in yesterday. There is a little fortune in my desk, and I shall add more to it. Do you think four thousand louis d'or will be sufficient to win the Savoyard's heart?"

"For any other it would be more than sufficient; but to win this honest heart, your offer is not too great."

"But is it enough?"

"It is."

"Now, all that we need is some sure, cunning messenger to send to him; a man whose heart and head, soul and body are bound up in the cause he advocates. General, where shall we find such a man?"

General Riedt laughed. "I thought your royal highness had already found him."

The princess looked at him in amazement.

"Ah," cried she, "the jeweller; the man who brought me the cup; who referred me to you in so wise and discreet a manner."

"I think you desired him to return early to-morrow morning?"

"How do you know that? Are you acquainted with him?"

General Riedt bowed smilingly. "I ventured to send him to your royal highness."

"Ah! I now understand it all, and must acknowledge that the jeweller is as great a negotiator as you are a diplomatist. The cup I showed you, you sent to me?"

"I received it from the Governor of Magdeburg, the Landgrave of Hesse; as I could do nothing with it, I ventured to send it to your royal highness."

"And I thank you, general, for sending it in so discreet, so wise a manner. We may, perhaps, succeed in keeping all this secret from my brother, so that he cannot act against us. Hasten away, general, and give the jeweller, or whatever else he may be, his instructions. Send him to me early in the morning for his reward."*

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROYAL HOUSE-SPY.

THE next morning, a carriage drew up before the garden of Sans-Souci, and a gentleman, in a glittering, embroidered court uniform, crept out slowly and with much difficulty. Coughing and murmuring peevish words to himself, he slipped into the *allée* leading to the terraces. His back was bent, and from under the three-cornered hat, ornamented with rich gold lace, came sparsely, here and there, a few silver hairs. Who could have recognized, in this doubled-up, decrepit form, now with tottering knees creeping up the terrace, the once gay, careless, unconcerned grand-master of ceremonies, Baron von Pöllnitz? Who could have supposed that this old weather-beaten visage, deformed with a thousand wrinkles, once belonged to the dashing cavalier? And yet, it was even so. Pöllnitz had grown old, and his back was bowed down under the yoke which the monster Time lays at last upon humanity; but his spirit remained unchanged. He had preserved his vivacity, his malice, his egotism. He had the same passion for gold—much gold; not, however, to hoard, but to lavish. His life was ever divided between base covetousness and thoughtless prodigality. When he had revelled and gormandized through the first days of every month, he was forced, during the last weeks, to suffer privation and hunger, or to borrow from those who were good-natured and credulous enough to lend him. There was also one other source of revenue which the adroit courtier knew how to use to his advantage. He was a splendid *écarte* player; and, as it was his duty, as grand-master of ceremonies, to provide amusements for the court, to choose places and partners for the card-tables, he always arranged it so as to bring himself in contact with wealthy and eager card-players, from some of whom

* The princess succeeded in winning the influence of the fireman. How he succeeded with the empress, can be seen in "Thiébault's Souvenirs de Vingt Ans," vol. iv.

he could win, and from others borrow a few louis d'or. Besides this, since the return of the king, Pöllnitz had voluntarily taken up his old trade of spy, and informed Frederick of all he saw and heard at court; for this, from time to time, he demanded a small reward.

"Curious idea," he said, as, puffing and blowing, he clambered up the terrace. "Curious idea to live in this wearisome desert, when he has respectable and comfortable castles in the midst of the city, and on a level plain. One might truly think that the king, even in life, wishes to draw nearer to heaven, and withdraws from the children of man, to pray and prepare himself for paradise."

The baron laughed aloud; it seemed to him a droll idea to look at the king as a prayerful hermit. This conception amused him, and gave him strength to go onward more rapidly, and he soon reached the upper platform of the terrace, upon which the castle stood. Without difficulty, he advanced to the antechamber, but there stood Deesen, and forbade him entrance to the king.

"His majesty holds a cabinet council," said he, "and it is expressly commanded to allow no one to enter."

"Then I will force an entrance," said Pöllnitz, stepping boldly to the door. "I must speak to his majesty; I have something most important to communicate."

"I think it cannot be more important than that which now occupies the king's attention," said the intrepid Deesen. "I am commanded to allow no one to enter; I shall obey the order of the king."

"I am resolved to enter," said Pöllnitz, in a loud voice; but Deesen spread his broad figure threateningly before the door. An angry dispute arose, and Pöllnitz made his screeching voice resound so powerfully, he might well hope the king would hear him, and in this he was not deceived; the king heard and appeared at once upon the threshold.

"Pöllnitz," said he, "you are and will always be an incorrigible fool; you are crowing as loud as a Gallic cock, who is declaring war against my people. I have made peace with the Gauls, mark that, and do not dare again to crow so loud. What do you want? Do your creditors wish to cast you in prison, or do you wish to inform me that you have become a Jew, and wish to accept some lucrative place as Rabbi?"

"No, sire, I remain a reformed Christian, and my creditors will never take the trouble to arrest me; they know that would avail nothing. I come on most grave and important matters of business, and I pray your majesty to grant me a private audience."

Frederick looked sternly at him. "Listen, Pöllnitz, you are still a long-winded and doubtful companion, notwithstanding your seventy-six years. Deliberate a moment; if that which you tell me is

not important, and requiring speedy attention, I will punish you severely for having dared to interrupt me in my cabinet council; I will withhold your salary for the next month."

"Your majesty, the business is weighty, and requires immediate attention; I stake my salary upon it."

"Come, then, into my cabinet, but be brief," said Frederick, stepping into the adjoining room. "Now speak," said he, as he closed the door.

"Sire, first, I must ask your pardon for daring to allude to a subject which is so old that its teeth are shaky and its countenance wrinkled."

"You wish, then, to speak of yourself?" said Frederick.

"No, sire; I will speak of a subject which bloomed before the war, and since then has withered and faded in a subterranean prison; but it now threatens to put forth new buds, to unfold new leaves, and I fear your majesty will find that undesirable."

"Speak, then, clearly, and without circumlocution. I am convinced it is only some gossiping or slander you wish to retail. You come as a salaried family spy who has snapped up some greasy morsels of scandal. Your eyes are glowing with malicious pleasure, as they always do when you are about to commit some base trick. Now, then, out with it! Of whom will you speak?"

"Of the Princess Amelia and Trenck," whispered Pöllnitz.

The king gazed at him fiercely for a moment, then turned and walked silently backward and forward.

"Well, what is your narrative?" said Frederick, at last, turning his back upon Pöllnitz, and stepping to the window as if to look out.

"Sire, if your majesty does not interfere, the Princess Amelia will send a negotiator to Vienna, who undertakes to induce the Empress Maria Theresa to apply to you for the release of Trenck. This negotiator is richly provided with gold and instructions; and the Austrian ambassador has pointed out to the princess a sure way to reach the ear of the empress, and to obtain an intercessor with her. She will appeal to the fireman of the empress, and this influential man will undertake to entreat Maria Theresa to ask for Trenck's release. This will take place immediately; an hour since the messenger received his instructions from General Riedt, and a quarter of an hour since he received four thousand louis d'or from the princess to bribe the fireman. If the intrigue succeeds, the princess has promised him a thousand louis d'or for himself."

"Go on," said the king, as Pöllnitz ceased speaking.

"Go on!" said Pöllnitz, with a stupefied air. "I have nothing more to say; it seems to me the history is sufficiently important."

"And it seems to me a silly fairy tale," said Frederick, turning

angrily upon the grand-master. "If you think to squeeze gold out of me by such ridiculous and senseless narratives, you are greatly mistaken. Not one farthing will I pay for these lies. Do you think that Austria lies on the borders of Tartary? There, a barber is minister; and you, forsooth, will make a fireman the confidential friend of the empress! Why, Scheherezade would not have dared to relate such an absurd fairy tale to her sleepy sultan, as you, sir, now seek to impose upon me!"

"But, sire, it is no fairy tale, but the unvarnished truth. The page of the princess listened, and immediately repeated all that he heard to me."

"Have you paid the page for this intelligence, which he asserts he overheard?"

"No, sire."

"Then go quickly to Berlin and reward him by two sound boxes on the ear, then go to bed and drink chamomile tea. It appears to me your head is weak."

"But, sire, I have told you nothing but the pure truth; no matter how fabulous it may appear."

Frederick gazed at him scornfully. "It is a silly tale," he cried, in a loud commanding voice. "Do not say another word, and do not dare to repeat to any one what you have now related. Go, I say! and forget this nonsense."

Pöllnitz crept sighing and with bowed head to the door, but, before he opened it, he turned once more to the king.

"Sire, this is the last day of the month, this wretched October has thirty-one days. Even if in your majesty's wisdom you decide this story to be untrue, you should at least remember my zeal."

"I should reward you for your zeal in doing evil?" said Frederick, shaking his head. "But truly this is the way of the world; evil is rewarded and good actions trodden under foot. You are not worth a kick! Go and get your reward; tell my servant to give you ten Fredericks d'or—but on one condition."

"What condition?" said Pöllnitz, joyfully.

"As soon as you arrive in Berlin, go to the castle, call the page of the princess, and box him soundly for his villany. Go!"

The king stood sunk in deep thought in the window-niche, long after Pöllnitz had left the room; he appeared to forget that his ministers were waiting for him; he thought of his sister Amelia's long, sad life, of her constancy and resignation, and a profound and painful pity filled his heart.

"Surely I dare at length grant her the poor consolation of having brought about his release," said he to himself. "She has been so long and so terribly punished for this unhappy passion, that I will

give her the consolation of plucking a few scentless blossoms from the grave of her heart. Let her turn to the fireman of the empress, and may my pious aunt be warmed up by his representations and prayers! I will not interfere; and if Maria Theresa intercedes for Trenck, I will not remember that he is a rebellious subject and a traitor, worthy of death. I will remember that Amelia has suffered inexpressibly for his sake, that her life is lonely and desolate—a horrible night, in which one feeble ray of sunshine may surely be allowed to fall. Poor Amelia! she loves him still!"

As Frederick stepped from the window and passed into the other room, he murmured to himself:

"There is something beautiful in a great, rich human heart. Better to die of grief and disappointment than to be made insensible by scorn and disdain—to be turned to stone!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLOUDS GATHER.

WHILE the king lived alone and quiet in Sans-Souci, and occupied himself with his studies and his government, the gayeties and festivities continued uninterrupted in Rheinsberg. It seemed that Prince Henry had no other thought, no other desire than to prepare new pleasures, new amusements for his wife. His life had been given up for so many years to earnest cares, that he now sought to indemnify himself by an eager pursuit after pleasure. *Fête* succeeded *fête*, and all of the most elegant and accomplished persons in Berlin, all those who had any claim to youth, beauty, and amiability, were invariably welcome at the palace of the prince.

It was late in the autumn, and Prince Henry had determined to conclude the long succession of wood and garden parties by a singular and fantastic entertainment. Before they returned to the saloons, the winter-quarters of pleasure, they wished to bid farewell to Nature. The nymphs of the wood and the spring, the hamadryads of the forests, the fauns and satyrs should reign once more in the woods before they placed the sceptre in the hands of winter. The guests of Rheinsberg should once more enjoy the careless gayety of a happy day, before they returned to the winter saloons, on whose threshold Etiquette awaited them, with her forced smile, her robes of ceremony and her orders and titles.

The ladies and gentlemen had been transformed, therefore, into gods and goddesses, nymphs, and hamadryads, fauns, satyrs, and wood-spirits. The horn of Diana resounded once more in the wood,

through which the enchanting huntress passed, accompanied by Endymion, who was pursued by Actæon. There was Apollo and the charming Daphne; Echo and the vain Narcissus; and, on the bank of the lake, which gleamed in the midst of the forest, the water-nymphs danced in a fairy-circle with the tritons.

The prince had himself made all the arrangements for this fantastic *fête;* he had selected the character, and appointed the place of every one, and, that nothing should fail, he had ordered all to seek their pleasures and adventures as they would—only, when the horn of the goddess Diana should sound, all must appear on the shore of the lake to partake of a most luxurious meal. The remainder of the day was to be given to the voluntary pleasures which each one would seek or make for himself, and in this the ladies and gentlemen showed themselves more ingenious than usual. In every direction goddesses were to be seen gliding through the bushes to escape the snares of some god, or seeking some agreeable rendezvous. At the edge of the lake lay charming gondolas ready for those who wished to rest and refresh themselves by a sail upon the dancing waves. For the hunters and huntresses targets were placed upon the trees; all kinds of fire-arms and cross-bows and arrows lay near them. Scattered throughout the forest, were a number of small huts, entirely covered with the bark of trees, and looking like a mass of fallen wood, but comfortably and even elegantly arranged in the interior. Every one of these huts was numbered, and at the beginning of the *fête* every lady had drawn a number from an urn, which was to designate the hut which belonged to her. Chance alone had decided, and each one had given her word not to betray the number of her cabin. From this arose a seeking and spying, a following and listening, which gave a peculiar charm to the *fête.* Every nymph or goddess could find a refuge in her cabin; having entered it, it was only necessary to display the ivy wreath, which she found within, to protect herself from any further pursuit, for this wreath announced to all that the mistress of the hut had retired within and did not wish her solitude disturbed. That nothing might mar the harmony of this *fête,* the prince and his wife had placed themselves on an equal footing with their guests; the princess had declined any conspicuous *rôle,* and was to appear in the simple but charming costume of a wood-nymph, while the prince had selected an ideal and fanciful hunter's costume. Even in the selection of huts the Princess Wilhelmina had refused to make any choice, and had drawn her number as the others did, even refusing a glimpse of it to her husband.

This day seemed given up to joy and pleasure. Every countenance was bright and smiling, and the wood resounded with merry

laughter, with the tones of the hunter's horn, the baying of the hounds, which were in Diana's train, and the singing of sweet songs. And still on how many faces the smile was assumed, how many sighs arose, with how many cares and sorrows were many of these apparently happy creatures weighed down? Even the noble brow of the goddess Diana was not so unruffled as Homer describes it, her countenance expressed care and unrest, and in her great black eyes there glowed such fire as had never shone in the orbs of the coy goddess.

See, there is the goddess Diana crossing the wood breathlessly, and hurriedly, looking anxiously around her, as if she feared the approach of some pursuers; then seeing that no one is near, she hastens forward toward the hut, which stands amidst those bushes. The ivy wreath is hanging before this cabin, but Diana does not notice this, she knows what it means and, besides, no one has a right to enter this hut but herself, for it bears the number which she drew.

As she entered, Endymion, the beautiful hunter, advanced to greet her. "At length you have come, Camilla," he whispered, gently; "at length you grant me the happiness of a private interview. Oh, it is an eternity since I beheld you. You are very cruel to me to refuse me all intercourse with you, and to leave me languishing in the distance for one glance from you."

"As if it depended on me to allow you to approach me. As if I was not guarded with argus eyes as a prisoner that is expected to break loose and vanish at any moment. How much trouble, how much cunning and deftness have I been compelled to exercise to come here now. It was a detestable idea of the princess to give me the *rôle* of Diana, for I have behind me a band of spies, and I assure you that my coy huntresses are so fearfully modest, that the sight of a man fills them with dread, and they flee before him into the wildest thicket of the woods."

"Perhaps because they have a lover concealed in the thicket," said Endymion.

Camilla laughed aloud. "Perhaps you are right. But when my huntresses fly, there still remains that horrible argus who guards me with his thousand eyes and never leaves my side. It was from pure malice that the prince gave that *rôle* to my detestable stepfather, and thus fastened him upon me."

"How did you succeed in escaping the watchfulness of your argus to come here?"

"I escaped at the moment the princess was speaking to him, and my huntresses were pursuing Actæon, which character the Baron von Kaphengst was representing with much humor. I wanted to

speak with you, for I have so much to relate to you. I must open to you my broken, my unhappy heart. You are my dear, faithful cousin Kindar, and I hope you will not leave your poor cousin, but give her counsel and assistance."

Baron von Kindar took Camilla's offered hand and pressed it to his lips. "Count upon me as upon your faithful slave, who would gladly die for you, as he cannot live for your sake."

"Listen then, *beau cousin*," whispered Camilla, smiling. "You know that my stern, upright husband has left Berlin in order to receive the post of an ambassador at Copenhagen. I would not accompany him because I was daily expecting the birth of my child, and the little creature was so sensible as not to enter the world until after the departure of its honored father, who, before leaving, had delivered me a lecture on the subject of his fidelity and tenderness, and of my duties as a lonely wife and young mother. I was compelled to swear to him among other things that I would not receive my *beau cousin* at my house."

"And you took that oath?" interrupted Kindar, reproachfully.

"I was forced to do so, or he would not have gone, or he would have taken me with him. Besides this, he left behind his old confidant the tutor, and told him that you should never be allowed to visit me. And to place the crown upon his jealousy, he betrayed the secret of his suspicions to my stepfather, and demanded of him the friendly service of accompanying me to all *fêtes* and balls, and to prevent you from approaching me."

"Am I then so dangerous?" said Kindar, with a faint smile.

"These gentlemen at least appear to think so; and if I did not care so much for you, I should really hate you, I have suffered so much on your account."

Baron von Kindar covered her hand with burning kisses for an answer to this.

"Be reasonable, *beau cousin*, and listen to me," said Camilla, as she laughingly withdrew her hand. "My husband has been, as I said, in Copenhagen for eight weeks, and has already entreated me to join him with the child, as I have entirely recovered."

"The barbarian!" murmured Kindar.

"I have declined up to this time under one pretext or another. But yesterday I receieved a lettr from my husband, in which he no longer entreats me, but dares, as he himself expresses it, to command me to leave Berlin two days after the receipt of his letter."

"But that is tyranny which passes all bounds," cried Kindar. "Does this wise lord think that his wife must obey him as a slave? Ah, Camilla, you owe it to yourself to show him that you

are a free-born woman, whom no one dare command, not even a husband."

"How shall I show him that?" asked Camilla.

"By remaining here," whispered Kindar. "You dare not think of leaving Berlin, for you know that the hour of your departure would be the hour of my death. You know it, for you have long known that I love you entirely, and that you owe me some recompense for the cruel pain I suffered when you married another."

"And in what shall this recompense consist?" asked Camilla with a coquettish smile.

Baron von Kindar placing his arm around her, whispered: "By remaining here, adored Camilla, for my sake—in declaring to your hated husband that you will leave Berlin on no account—that your honor demands that you should prove to him in the face of his brutal commands, that these are no commands for you—and that you will follow your own will and inclination. Therefore you will remain in Berlin."

"Will you write this letter for me?"

"If I do so, will you consent to remain here, and to open your door to me in spite of the orders of your husband, or the argus-eyes of your stepfather?"

"Write the letter, the rest will arrange itself," said Camilla.

"I will write it to-night. May I bring it to you myself to-morrow morning?"

"If I say no, will you then be so kind as to give it to my maid?"

"I swear by my honor that I will only give the letter into your own hands."

"Well, then, my tyrannical cousin, you force me to open my door to you in spite of my husband and my stepfather, and in the face of this Cerberus of a tutor who guards my stronghold."

"But what do I care for these open doors so long as your heart remains closed against me, Camilla? Ah, you laugh—you mock at my sufferings. Have you no pity, no mercy? You see what I suffer, and you laugh."

"I laugh," she whispered, "because you are so silly, *beau cousin.* But listen, there is the call of my huntresses—I must hasten to them, or they will surround this cabin and they might enter. Farewell. To-morrow I will expect you with the letter. Adieu." Throwing him a kiss with the tips of her fingers, she hastily left the hut.

Baron von Kindar looked after her with a singular smile. "She is mine," he whispered. "We will have a charming little romance, but it will terminate in a divorce, and not in a marriage. I have no idea of following up this divorce by a marriage. God protect

me from being forced to marry this beautiful, frivolous, coquettish woman."

While this scene was taking place in one part of the forest, the *fête* continued gayly. They sang and laughed, and jested, and no one dreamed that dark sin was casting its cold shadow over this bright scene—that the cowardly crime of treachery had already poisoned the pure air of this forest. None suspected it less than Prince Henry himself. He was happy and content that this *fête* had succeeded so well—that this bright autumn day had come opportunely to his aid. The sun penetrated to his heart and made it warm and joyous. He had just made a little tour through the forest with some of his cavaliers, and had returned to the tent on the bank of the lake, where he had last seen the princess amid a bevy of nymphs, but she was no longer there, and none of the ladies knew where she had gone.

"She has retired to her hut," said the prince to himself, as he turned smilingly toward the thick woods. "The only thing is to discover her hut; without doubt she is there and expects me to seek her. Now, then, may fortune assist me to discover my beloved. I must find her if only to prove to her that my love can overcome all difficulties and penetrate every mystery. There are twenty-four huts—I know their situation. I will visit each, and it will be strange indeed if I cannot discover my beautiful Wilhelmina."

He advanced with hasty steps in the direction of the huts. By a singular coincidence they were all vacant, the ivy wreath was displayed on none, and the prince could enter and convince himself that no one was within. He had visited twenty-three of the huts without finding the object of his search. "I will go to the last one," said the prince, gayly; "perhaps the gods have led me astray only that I might find happiness at the end of my path." He saw the last hut in the distance. It nestled in the midst of low bushes, looking quiet and undisturbed, and on the door hung the ivy wreath. The heart of the prince beat with joy, and he murmured, "She is there—I have found her," as he hastened toward the hut. "No," he said, "I dare not surprise her. I must consider the law sacred which I made. The ivy wreath is before the door—no one dare enter. But I will lie down before the door, and when she comes out she must cross my body or fall into my arms." The prince approached the hut quietly, careful to avoid making any noise. When he had reached it, he sank slowly upon the grass, and turned his eyes upon the door, which concealed his beloved one from his view.

Deep silence reigned. This was a charming spot, just suited for a tender rendezvous, and full of that sweet silence which speaks so

eloquently to a loving heart. In the distance could be heard the sound of the hunter's horn, whilst the great trees rustled their leaves as though they wished to mingle their notes in the universal anthem. The prince gave himself up for a long time to the sweet pleasures of this solitude, turning his smiling glance first to the heavens where a few white clouds were floating, and then again to earth, where some glittering insect attracted his gaze.

But what was it which pierced through him with a deadly horror —which made him become so pale, and turn his flashing eyes with an indescribable expression of dread toward the hut? Why did he partially arise from his reclining position as the hunter does, who sees the prey approach that he wishes to destroy? What was it that made him press his lips so tightly, one against the other, as if he would repress a cry of agony, or an execration? And why does he listen now with bated breath, his gaze fixed upon the hut, and both hands raised, as if to threaten an approaching enemy? Suddenly he sprang up, and rushed trembling to the door, and, while in the act of bursting it open, he fell back, pale as death, as if his foot had trodden upon a poisonous serpent. Thus retreating, with wildly staring eyes, with half-open lips, which seemed stiffened in the very act of uttering a shriek, he slowly left the hut, and then suddenly, as if he could no longer look at any thing so frightful, he turned and fled from the spot as if pursued by furies. Farther, always farther, until his strength and his breath were exhausted; then he sank down.

"It was cowardly to fly," he murmured; "but I felt that I should murder them, if they came out of the hut before my eyes. A voice within whispered, 'Fly, or you will be a murderer!' I obeyed it almost against my will. It was cowardly—an unpardonable error, but I will return to the hut."

He sprang forward like a tiger, ready to fall upon his prey. His hand involuntarily sought his side for his sword.

"Ah, I have no weapon," he said, gnashing his teeth, "I must murder them with my hands."

He advanced with uplifted head, defiant as a conqueror, or as one who has overcome death and has nothing to fear. The hut was again before him, but it no longer smiled at him; it filled him with horror and fury. Now he has reached it, and with one blow he bursts open the door; but it is empty. The prince had not remarked that the ivy-wreath was no longer displayed, and that the hut was therefore vacant.

"They are gone," he murmured. "This time they have escaped punishment, but it surely awaits them."

CHAPTER IX.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

A MONTH had passed since Amelia dispatched her emissary to the queen's fireman, and she had as yet received no definite intelligence. General Riedt had called but once; he told her he had succeeded in interesting the Savoyard in Trenck's fate, and he had promised to remind the empress of the unfortunate prisoner. But a condition must be attached to this promise: no one must approach him again on this subject; it must be kept an inviolable secret. Only when Trenck was free would the fireman receive the other half of the stipulated sum; if he failed in his attempt, he would return the money he now held.

This was all that the princess had heard from Vienna; her heart was sorrowful—almost hopeless. Trenck still sat in his wretched prison at Magdeburg, and she scarcely dared hope for his release.

It was a dark, tempestuous November day. The princess stood at the window, gazing at the whirling snow-flakes, and listening to the howling of the pitiless storm. They sounded to her like the raging shrieks of mocking, contending spirits, and filled her heart with malignant joy.

"Many ships will go down to destruction in the roaring sea; many men will lose all that they possess," she murmured, with a coarse laugh. "God sends His favorite daughter, the bride of the winds; she sings a derisive song to men; she shows them how weak, how pitiful they are. She sweeps away their possessions—touches them on that point where alone they are sensitive. I rejoice in the howling, whistling tempest! This is the voice of the great world-spirit, dashing by in the thunder, and making the cowardly hearts of men tremble. They deserve this punishment; they are utterly unworthy and contemptible. I hate, I despise them all! Only when I see them suffer can I be reconciled to them. Aha! the storm has seized a beautifully-dressed lady. How it whirls and dashes her about! Look how it lifts her robe, making rare sport of her deceitful, affected modesty. Miserable, variegated butterfly that you are, you think yourself a goddess of youth and beauty. This wild tempest teaches you that you are but a poor, pitiful insect, tossed about in the world like any other creeping thing—a powerless atom. The storm first takes possession of your clothes, now of your costly hat. Wait, my lady, wait! one day it will take your heart; it will be crushed and broken to pieces—there will be none to pity. The world laughs and mocks at the wretched. Misfortune

is the only disgrace which is never forgiven. You may be a thief, a murderer, and you will be pardoned if you are adroit enough to slip your head from the noose. Criminals are pitied and pardoned, unfortunates never. Ah, this is a mad, gay world, and they are fools who take it earnestly; who do not laugh—laugh even as I do."

The princess laughed aloud—if that could be called a laugh, from which she shuddered back herself in terror.

"It is bitter cold here," she said, shuddering; "I think I shall never be warm again. I am always freezing, and this miserable frost has turned my heart and soul to ice. I would like to know if they will thaw in the grave?"

She stepped slowly from the window, and crept through the large, empty room to the chimney, where a large wood-fire was burning—now flickering up in clear flames, now breaking into glowing coals.

Amelia took the poker, and amused herself by dashing the coals apart, and watching the flashing, dancing flames. The fire seemed to embrace her whole figure, and threw a rosy shimmer over her wan and fallen cheeks. She gazed deep down into the glowing coals, and murmured broken, disconnected words. From time to time a mocking smile trembled on her lips, then heavy sighs wrung her breast. Was she perhaps telling the fire of the flames which raged within her bosom? Was she perhaps a magician, who understood the language of these mysterious tongues of flame, and answered their burning questions? The hasty opening of the door aroused her from her dreams, and a page entered and announced in a loud voice—"His majesty the king!"

Amelia bowed her head, and advanced slowly and with a stern countenance to meet the king, who now appeared at the threshold.

"May I enter, my sister, or do you command me to withdraw?" said Frederick, smiling.

"The king has no permission to ask," said Amelia, earnestly; "he is everywhere lord and master. The doors of all other prisons open before him, and so also do mine."

Frederick nodded to the page to leave the room and close the door, then advanced eagerly to meet his sister. Giving her his hand, he led her to the divan, and seated himself beside her.

"You regard me then as a kind of jailer," he said, in a gentle, loving voice.

"Can a king be any thing but a jailer?" she said, roughly. "Those who displease him, he arrests and casts into prison, and not one of his subjects can be sure that he will not one day displease him."

"You, at least, my sister, have not this to fear, and yet you have just called this your prison."

"It is a prison, sire."

"And am I, then, your jailer?"

"No, sire, life is my jailer."

"You are right, there, Amelia. Life is the universal jailer, from whom death alone can release us. The world is a great prison, and only fools think themselves free. But we are involuntarily commencing an earnest, philosophical conversation. I come to you to rest, to refresh myself; to converse harmlessly and cheerfully, as in our earlier and happier days. Tell me something, dear sister, of your life, your occupations, and your friends?"

"That is easily done, and requires but few words," said Amelia, hoarsely. "Of my life I have already told you all that can be said. Life is my jailer, and I look longingly to death, who alone can release me. As to my well-being, there is nothing to say; all is evil, only evil continually. My occupations are monotonous, I am ever asleep. Night and day I sleep and dream; and why should I awake? I have nothing to hope, nothing to do. I am a superfluous piece of furniture in this castle, and I know well you will all rejoice when I am placed in the vault. I am an old maid, or, if you prefer it, I am a wall-frog, who has nothing to do but creep into my hole, and, when I have vitality enough, to spit my venom upon the passers-by. As to my friends, I have nothing to relate; I have no friends! I hate all mankind, and I am hated by all. I am especially on my guard with those who pretend to love me; I know that they are deceitful and traitorous, that they are only actuated by selfish motives."

"Poor sister," said the king, sadly; "how unhappy must you be to speak thus! Can I do nothing to alleviate your misfortune?"

Amelia laughed loudly and scornfully. "Forgive me, your majesty, but your question reminds me of a merry fairy tale I have just read of a cannibal who is in the act of devouring a young girl. The poor child pleaded piteously for her life, naturally in vain. 'I cannot, of course, give you your life,' said the cannibal, 'but I will gladly grant you any other wish of your heart. Think, then, quickly, of what you most desire, and be assured I will fulfil your request.' The pretty maiden, trembling with horror and despair, could not collect her thoughts. Then, after a short pause, the cannibal said, 'I cannot wait; I am hungry! but in order to grant you a little longer time to determine upon the favor you will ask, I will not, as I am accustomed to do, devour the head first, I will commence with the feet.' So saying, he cut off the legs and ate them, and on cutting off each limb he graciously asked the poor shuddering, whimper-

ing being, 'Well, why do you not think? Is there, then, no favor I can show you?' Confess now, sire, that this was a most magnanimous cannibal."

Frederick laughed heartily, and appeared not to understand his sister's double meaning.

"You are right," said he; "that is a merry fairy tale, and brings the tears to my eyes—I scarcely know whether from laughter or weeping. Where did you read it, my sister?"

"The fire-spirits who spring up and down in the chimney so lustily, related it to me. Oh, sire, these are merry sprites; and often in my solitude, when I am sitting in my arm-chair in the chimney-corner, they nod to me, and chat freely of by-gone times, and the days which are to come."

"I fear they have not much that is cheerful or encouraging, certainly not much that is interesting to tell you," said Frederick.

"To those who, like us, have passed the meridian of life, and are going rapidly down-hill, the surroundings become ever duller and more drear; for us there are no more great and agreeable surprises; the farther they advance, the more lonely and desolate it appears; life has no more to offer, and they are glad at last to reach the valley and lie down in quiet graves. But while we live and are still wanderers, Amelia, we must not fold our hands in idleness; we must work and achieve. You also, my sister, must be active and energetic; an unusual opportunity is now offered you. The Abbess of Quedlinberg is dead, and you can now enter upon her duties."

"And your majesty thinks it is really a worthy vocation for me to go to Quedlinberg and become the shepherdess of that fearful flock of old maids who took refuge in a nunnery because no man desired them? No, your majesty, do not send me to Quedlinberg; it is not my calling to build up the worthy nuns into saints of the Most High. I am too unsanctified myself to be an example to them, and, in fact, I feel no inclination to purify them from their sins."

"Well, that might be found a difficult task," said the king, laughing, "and it would not make you beloved. Men love nothing so much as their vices, and they hate those who would free them from their cherished yoke. You can, however, remain in Berlin and still accept this office, once so worthily filled by the lovely Aurora of Königsmark. King Augustus gave her, at least, with this refuge, provided by his love, a rich widow's income; and you can now, Amelia, enjoy the fruit of that love which at one time filled all Europe with admiration. The salary of the abbess amounts to seventeen thousand thalers, and I think this addition to your fortune will be welcome. Your income will now be forty thousand thalers."

"Lodging and fuel included," said Amelia, with a sarcastic laugh. "Look you, sire, I see that I have nothing to complain of. My hospital is splendidly endowed, and if I should ever become miserly, I may be able to lay aside a few thalers yearly."

"I will gladly put it in your power to lay aside a larger sum, if you become covetous," said the king; "and I beg you, therefore, to allow me the pleasure of raising your salary as princess, six thousand thalers." *

Amelia looked at him distrustfully. "You are very gracious to me to-day, my brother. You grant favors before I ask them. I confess to you this alarms and agitates me. You have perhaps some bad news to disclose, and fearing I will be crushed by it, you desire, beforehand, to apply a balsam."

The king's glance was tender and sympathetic. "Poor Amelia! you will, then, never believe in my affection," said he, mildly. "You distrust even your brother! Oh, Amelia! life has hardened us both. We entered upon the stage of life with great but fleeting illusions. How gloriously grand and beautiful did the world appear to us; now we look around us soberly, almost hopelessly! What remains of our ideals? What has become of the dreams of our youth?"

"The storm-winds have shattered and scattered them," cried Amelia, laughing. "The evil fiend has ploughed over the fair soil of your youth and turned it to stone and ashes. I am content that this is so. I would rather wander amongst ruins and dust and ashes than to walk gayly over a smooth surface with whose dark caves and pitfalls I was unacquainted, and which might any day ingulf me. When both foundation and superstructure lie in ruins at your feet, you have nothing more to fear. But I say this for myself, sire, not for you, the fame-crowned king, who has astonished the world by his victories, and now fills it with admiration by the wisdom with which he governs his subjects and advances the glory of his kingdom!"

"My child," said the king, mildly, "fame has no longer any attraction for me. Nero was also renowned; he burned cities and temples, and tortured Seneca to death. Erostratus succeeded in making his name imperishable. I am utterly indifferent as to the world's admiration of my wisdom and power to govern. I try to do my duty as a king. But I tell you, child, in one little corner of the king's heart there remains ever something human; and the poor creature man sometimes cries out for a little personal comfort and happiness. One may be very rich as a king, but poor—oh, how poor—as a man! Let us, however, dismiss these sad thoughts. I was speak-

* History of Berlin and Court.

ing to you of money, Amelia. We will return to this theme. I cannot prevent your heart from suffering, but I can secure to you every outward good. Your income, until now, has been small; tell me what debts you have contracted, and I will pay them!"

"Your majesty falls into my room like a shower of gold," cried Amelia; "you will find no Danæ here, only an ugly old maid, who is, however, ready to receive the glittering treasure; but you give me credit for too good a memory when you think I know the amount of my debts. I only know the sum now in my casket."

"And what is the amount, Amelia?"

"A cipher, sire; your majesty knows this is the end of the month."

"I know it, my sister; and I therefore beg you to accept from me to-day a small sum in advance. I dreamt last night that you had recently been called upon to pay out four thousand louis d'or. This dream was significant; it seemed to me a suggestion to give you this sum. I therefore sent, in your name, an order on my treasurer for four thousand louis d'or."

Amelia looked at him and trembled with terror. "Do you know the use to which I have applied this sum?" said she, breathlessly.

"My dream was silent on this point," said Frederick, rising; "it only told me that you needed this amount, nothing more. If I had been curious, I might have asked your page, who has an acute ear, and for whom no key-hole is too small."

"Ah, he has betrayed me, then," murmured Amelia.

Frederick did not appear to hear her; he took his hat, and offered his sister his hand. Amelia did not see it; she stood as if turned to stone in the middle of the room, and as the king advanced toward the door, she stepped slowly and mechanically after him.

Suddenly the king turned and looked at his sister.

"I had almost forgotten to tell you a piece of news," said he, carelessly; "something which will perhaps interest you, Amelia. Even at this moment a prisoner is being released from his cell and restored to life and liberty. The Empress Maria Theresa, influenced by her fireman, it is said, has appealed to me—"

Princess Amelia uttered a heart-rending shriek, and rushing forward she seized the arm of the king with both her trembling hands.

"Brother! oh, brother, be merciful! do not make cruel sport of me. I acknowledge I appealed to the fireman of the empress. I offered him four thousand louis d'or if he would intercede for Trenck. I see that you know all; I deny nothing. If I have committed a crime worthy of death, condemn me; but do not inflict such fearful tortures before my execution. Do not mock at my great grief, but be pitiful. Look upon me, brother; look at my

withered limbs, my deformed visage; is not my punishment sufficient? torture me no longer. You return me the sum of money I sent to Vienna: does that mean that you have discovered and destroyed my plot? Is this so, brother? Have you the heart to play this cruel jest with me? Having thus made my last attempt fruitless, do you tell me in mockery that Trenck is free?" She held the arm of the king firmly, and half sinking to her knees, she looked up at him breathlessly.

"No, Amelia," said Frederick, and his voice trembled with emotion. "No, I have not that cruel courage. The hand of your clock points now to twelve; at this moment Trenck leaves Magdeburg in a closed carriage, accompanied by two soldiers. To-morrow he will reach Prague, and then he is free to go where he will, only not in Prussia. Trenck is free."

"Trenck is free!" repeated Amelia, with a shout of joy; she sprang from her knees, clasped the king in a close embrace, and wept upon his bosom such tears as she had not shed for many long years—tears of holy happiness, of rapture inexpressible; then suddenly releasing him, she ran rapidly about the room, in the midst of bitter weeping breaking out into loud ringing laughter, a laugh which rung so fresh, so joyous, it seemed an echo from her far-off happy childhood. "Trenck is free! free!" repeated she again; "and, oh, unspeakable happiness! *I* obtained him his liberty! ah, no, not I, but a poor Savoyard who wished a dower for his daughter. Oh, ye great ones of the earth, speak no more of your glory and power, a poor Savoyard was mightier than you all! But no, no; what have I said? you, my brother, you have released him. To you Trenck owes his life and liberty. I thank you that these fearful chains, which held my soul in bondage, have fallen apart. Once more I breathe freely, without the appalling consciousness that every breath I draw finds this echo in a cavern of the earth. You have released me from bondage, oh, my brother, and henceforth I will love you with all the strength of my being. Yes, I will love you," cried she, eagerly; "I will cling to you with unchanging constancy; you will ever find in me a faithful ally. I can be useful. I cannot act, but I can listen and watch. I will be your spy. I will tell you all I see. I will read all hearts and make known to you their thoughts. Even now I have something to disclose; do not trust your brothers. Above all others put no faith in Prince Henry; he hates you with a perfect hatred for the sake of Augustus William, who, he says, died of your contempt and cruelty. Trust him in nothing; he is ambitious, he envies you your throne; he hates me also, and calls me always '*La fée malfaisant.*' He shall be justified in this! I will be for him *La fée malfaisant.* I will revenge myself for this hatred.

Without my help, however, he will soon be sufficiently punished. His beautiful Wilhelmina will revenge me."

She broke out in wild and convulsive laughter, and repeated again and again in joyous tones, "Yes, yes, his beautiful Wilhelmina will punish him for calling me an old witch."

The king shuddered at her mad laughter, and was oppressed by her presence; her mirth was sadder than her tears. He bade her a silent adieu, and hastened away as if flying from a pestilence. The princess did not detain him; she had fallen upon a chair, and staring immovably before her, she cried out: "Trenck is free! Trenck is free! Life is his once more! I must, I will live till I have seen him once more. Then, when my poor eyes have looked upon him yet once again, then I will die—die!" *

Suddenly she sprang from her seat. "I must know Trenck's future; I must draw his horoscope. I must question the cards as to his destiny, and know whether happiness or misery lies before him. Yes, I will summon my fortune-teller. There is a destiny which shapes our ends."

CHAPTER X.

THE STOLEN CHILD.

It was a dark, stormy December night. The long-deserted streets of Berlin were covered with deep snow. By the glare of a small oil-lamp affixed to a post, the tall form of a man, wrapped in a large travelling-cloak, could be seen leaning against a wall; he was gaz-

* This wish of the princess was fulfilled after the death of Frederick the Great. Trenck received permission from his successor, Frederick William II., to return to Berlin. He was graciously received at court; his first visit, even before he was announced to the king, was paid to the Princess Amelia. She received him in the same room in which, forty-seven years before, they had passed so many happy hours. Upon the same spot where, beautiful in youth and grace, they had once sworn eternal love and faith, they now looked upon each other and sought in vain, in these fallen and withered features, for any trace of those charms, which had once enraptured them. Trenck remained many hours with her; they had much to relate. He confessed freely all the events of his fantastic and adventurous life. She listened with a gentle smile, and forgave him for all his wanderings and all his sins. On taking leave he promised the princess to bring his oldest daughter and present her, and Amelia promised to be a mother to her. Death, however, prevented the fulfilment of these promises. It appeared as if this interview had exhausted her remaining strength. In 1786, a few days after the meeting with Trenck, Amelia died. Trenck lived but a few years; he went to France and died under the guillotine in 1793. As he sat with his companions upon the car on their way to execution, he said to the gaping crowd: "*Eh bien, eh bien, de quoi vous émerveillez-vous? Ceci n'est qu'une comédie à la Robespierre.*" These were Trenck's last words; a few moments afterward his head fell under the guillotine.

ing fixedly at the houses opposite him. The snow beat upon his face, his limbs were stiff from the cold winter wind, his teeth chattered, but he did not seem to feel it. His whole soul, his whole being was filled with one thought, one desire. What mattered it to him if he suffered, if he died? As a dark shadow appeared at the opposite door, life and energy once more came back to the stoic. He crossed the street hastily.

"Well, doctor," said he, eagerly, "what have you discovered?"

"It is as your servant informed you, my lord. Your wife, Lady Elliot, is not at home. She is at a ball at Count Verther's, and will not return till after midnight."

"But my child? my daughter?" said Lord Elliot, in a trembling voice.

"She, of course, is at home, my lord. She is in the chamber adjoining your former sleeping apartment. No one but the nurse is with her."

"It is well—I thank you, doctor. All I now require of you is to send my valet, whom I sent to your house after me, with my baggage. Farewell!"

He was rushing away, but the doctor detained him.

"My lord," said he, in a low and imploring voice, "consider the matter once more before you act. Remember that you will thus inform all Berlin of your unfortunate wedded life, and become subject to the jeers and laughter of the so-called nobility; lowering the tragedy of your house to a proverb."

"Be it so," said Lord Elliot, proudly, "I have nothing to fear. The whole world knows that my honor is stained; before the whole world will I cleanse it."

"But in doing so, my lord, you disgrace your wife."

"Do you not think she justly deserves it?" said Lord Elliot, harshly.

"But you should have pity on her youth."

"Doctor, when one has suffered as I have, every feeling is extinguished from the heart but hatred. As I have not died of grief, I shall live to revenge my sufferings. My determination is unalterable. I must and will tear my child from the bad influence of her mother, then I will punish the guilty."

"Consider once more, my lord—wait this one night. You have just arrived from a hasty, disagreeable journey; you are excited, your blood is in a fever heat, and now, without allowing yourself a moment's rest, you wish to commence your sad work."

"I must have my child. You know that as it is a girl the mother can dispute this right with me, for by the laws of this land in case of divorce, the daughters are left to their mother."

"You should endeavor to obtain her by kindness."

"And suppose that Camilla, not out of love to the child, but to wound and torture me, should refuse me my daughter, what then? Ah! you are silent, doctor; you see I cannot act otherwise."

"I fear, my lord, you will have some trouble in getting the child. Lady Elliot has lately changed all the servants engaged by you, not one of them was allowed to remain. It is most likely that none of the present servants know you, and therefore you will not be obeyed."

"My plans are all arranged, they shall not prevent me from fulfilling them."

"But if they refuse to let you enter?"

"Ah, but I shall not ask them, for I have the keys necessary to enter my own house. When I left home, Camilla threw them laughing and jesting into my trunk—I now have them with me. All your objections are confuted. Again, farewell. If you wish to give me another token of your friendship, meet me at the depot in an hour. I will be there with my child."

He pressed the doctor's hand tightly, and then hurried into the house. Noiselessly he mounted the steps. He now stood in front of the large glass door leading to his dwelling; he leaned for a moment against the door gasping for breath—for a moment a shuddering doubt overcame him; he seemed to see the lovely countenance of Camilla, bedewed with tears, imploring his mercy, his pity. "No, no! no pity, no mercy," he murmured; "onward, onward!"

He drew forth a key, opened the door and closed it noiselessly behind him. A bright lamp burned in the hall; sounds of laughing and merry-making could be heard from the servants' hall; the cries of a child, and the soft lullaby of a nurse from above. No one saw or heard the dark form of their returned master pass slowly through the hall. No one saw him enter his former sleeping apartments. He was so conversant with the room that he found his way in the dark without difficulty to his secretary. Taking from it a candle and some matches, he soon had a bright light. He then glanced sternly around the room. All was as usual, not a chair had been moved since he left. Beneath the secretary were the scraps of letters and papers he had torn up the day of his journey. Even the book he had been reading that morning lay upon the table in front of the sofa; beside it stood the same silver candlesticks, with the same half-burnt candles. It had all been untouched; only he, the master of the apartment, had been touched by the burning hand of misfortune—he alone was changed, transformed. He smiled bitterly as his eye glanced at every object that formerly contributed to his happiness. Then taking up the light, he approached the table upon

which stood the two silver candlesticks; lighting one after the other, the large, deserted-looking chamber became illuminated, bringing the pictures on the walls, the heavy satin curtains, the handsome furniture, the tables covered with costly knick-knacks, the large Japan vases, and a huge clock upon the mantel-piece, into view. All bore a gay and festive appearance, much at variance with the unfortunate man's feelings.

His glance had wandered everywhere. Not once, however, had his eye strayed to two large pictures hanging on the left side of the room. The one was of himself—gay, smiling features, a bright glance such as was never now seen upon his countenance. The other was Camilla—Camilla in her bridal robes, as beautiful and lovely as a dream, with her glorious, child-like smile in which he had so long believed—for which, seeing in it the reflection of her pure, innocent soul, she was so unspeakably dear to him. To these two pictures he had completely turned his back, and was walking sadly up and down the room. He now raised his head proudly, and his countenance, which but a moment before had been sad and dejected, was now daring and energetic.

"It is time," murmured he.

With a firm hand he grasped a bell lying upon the table. Its loud, resounding ring disturbed the deep stillness that reigned throughout the apartments, causing Lord Elliot's heart to tremble with woe. But there was no noise—all remained quiet. Lord Elliot waited awhile, then opening the door passed into the hall. Returning, he again rang the bell long and loudly. "They cannot fail to hear me now," said he.

Several doors were now opened by some of the servants, but their terror was such that they retreated in haste, slamming the doors behind them.

Lord Elliot rang again. A servant now hastened forward; another soon followed; a third door was opened from which sprang a lively, trim-looking lady's maid. She was followed by the house-girl. Even the cook rushed up the steps. All hurried forward to a room which was generally kept locked, but which now stood wide open. All gazed at the man standing there scanning them with an earnest, commanding glance. They stood thus lost in wonder for a moment, then Lord Elliot approached the door.

"Do you know me—you, there?" said he.

"No, we do not know you," said the waiter, with some hesitation. "We do not know you, and would like to know by what right—"

"There is no question here of your likes or dislikes, but of the orders you will receive from me. Do you know the picture next to the one of your mistress?"

"We have been told that it is our master, Lord Elliot."

Lord Elliot advanced nearer the picture, and stood beneath it. "Do you know me now?" said he.

The servants examined him critically for a time, then whispered and consulted together.

"Now do you know me?" repeated Lord Elliot.

"We think we have the honor of seeing his excellency, Lord Elliot," said the waiter.

"Yes, Lord Elliot," repeated the lady's-maid, the house-girl, and the cook, bowing respectfully.

He ordered them to enter the room. Tremblingly they obeyed him.

"Are these all the servants, or are there any more of you?" said he.

"No one but the nurse, who is with the little lady, and the coachman who is in the stable."

"That is right. Come nearer, all of you."

As they obeyed, he closed and locked the door, dropping the key in his pocket. The servants looked at him in wonder and terror, hardly daring to breathe. Though they had never seen their master, they knew by his stern, expressive countenance that something remarkable was about to transpire. Like all other servants, they were well acquainted with the secrets, the behavior of their employer. They were, therefore, convinced that their mistress was the cause of their master's strange conduct.

"Do not dare to move from this spot—do not make a sound," said Lord Elliot, taking a light and advancing to a second door. "Remain here. If I need you I will call." Throwing a last look at the servants, Lord Elliot entered the adjoining room, drawing the bolt quickly behind him.

"All is right now," said he, softly. "None of them can fly to warn Camilla to return." Candle in hand, he passed through the chamber, looking neither to right nor left. He wished to ignore that he was now in Camilla's room, which was associated with so many painfully sweet remembrances to him. He entered another room—he hurried through it. As he passed by the large bedstead surrounded by heavy silk curtains, the candle in his hand shook, and a deep groan escaped his breast. He now stood at the door of the next chamber. He stopped for a moment to gain breath and courage. With a hasty movement he threw open the door and entered. His heart failed him when he beheld the peaceful scene before him. A dark shady carpet covered the floor, simple green blinds hung at the windows. There were no handsome paintings on the wall, no glittering chandelier, no bright furniture, and still the apartment

contained a wondrous tenement, a great treasure. For in the middle of the room stood a cradle, in the cradle lay his child, his first-born—the child of his love, of his lost happiness. He knew by the great joy that overcame him, by the loud beating of his heart, by the tears that welled to his eyes, that this was his child. He prayed God to bless it—he swore to love it faithfully to all eternity. He at last found the strength to approach the little sleeping being whose presence filled him with such wild joy.

The nurse sat by the cradle fast asleep. She did not see Lord Elliot kneel beside the cradle and look tenderly at the sleeping face of her nursling—she did not see him kiss the child, then lay its little hands upon his own bowed head as if he needed his little daughter's blessing to strengthen him. But all at once she was shaken by a strong hand, and a loud, commanding voice ordered her to wake up, to open her eyes. She sprang from her chair in terror—she had had a bad dream. But there still stood the strange man, saying in a stern voice, "Get up and prepare to leave here at once with me."

She wished to cry for help, but as she opened her mouth, he threw his strong arm around her. "If you make a sound, I take the child and leave you here alone. I have the right to command here —I am the father of this child."

"Lord Elliot!" cried the nurse, in amazement.

Lord Elliot smiled. This involuntary recognition of his right did him good and softened him.

"Fear nothing," said he, kindly, "no harm shall happen to you. I take you and the child. If you love and are kind to it, you shall receive from me a pension for life; from to-day your wages are doubled. For this I demand nothing, but that you should collect at once the necessary articles of clothing of this child, and put them together. If you are ready in fifteen minutes, I will give you this gold piece."

He looked at his watch, and took from his purse a gold piece, which lent wings to the stout feet of the nurse.

"Is all you need in here?" said he.

Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he took his light and left the chamber. Before leaving, however, he locked another door leading into the hall, so as to prevent the possible escape of the nurse.

As he entered Camilla's boudoir his countenance became dark and stern; every gentle and tender feeling that his child had aroused now fled from his heart. He was now the insulted husband, the man whose honor was wounded in its most sensitive point—who came to punish. to revenge, to seek the proofs of the guilt he sus-

pected. He placed the light upon the table, and opened his wife's portfolio to seek for the key of her drawer, which was generally kept there. It was in its usual place. Lord Elliot shuddered as he touched it; it felt like burning fire in his hand.

"It is the key to my grave," murmred he.

With a firm hand he put the key in the lock, opened the drawer, and drew out the letters and papers it contained. There were his own letters, the letters of love and tenderness he had sent her from Copenhagen; among them he found others full of passionate proofs of the criminal and unholy love he had come to punish. Camilla had not had the delicacy to separate her husband's from her lover's letters; she had carelessly thrown them in the same drawer. As Lord Elliot saw this he laughed aloud, a feeling of inexpressible contempt overpowered his soul and deadened his pain. He could not continue to love one who had not only been faithless to him, but wanting in delicacy to the partner of her sin.

Lord Elliot read but one of the *beau cousin's* letters, then threw it carelessly aside. He did not care to read more of the silly speeches, the guilty protestations of constancy of her insipid lover. He searched but for one letter; he wished to find the original of the last one Camilla had written to him, for he knew her too well to give her credit for the composition of that cold, sneering, determined letter. He wished, therefore, to find the author, whose every word had pierced his soul like a dagger, driving him at first almost to madness.

A wild, triumphant cry now escaped from him, resounding fearfully in the solitary chambers. He had found it! The letter was clutched tightly in his trembling hands as he read the first lines. It was in the same hand as the others, it was the writing of his rival, Von Kindar, her *beau cousin.*

Lord Elliot folded the paper carefully and hid it in his bosom; then throwing the others into the drawer, he locked it, placing the key in the portfolio.

"It is well," said he, "I have now all I need. This letter is his death-warrant."

He took the light and left the room. Fifteen minutes had just elapsed when he entered his daughter's chamber. The nurse advanced to meet him, the child and a bundle of clothes in her arms, and received the promised gold piece.

"Now, we must hasten," said he, stepping into the hall.

They passed silently through the house, down the steps, and into the court-yard. Lord Elliot walked hastily on, followed by the wondering nurse. He stopped at the stable door, calling loudly upon the coachman to get up and prepare the horses. At twelve o'clock the

coachman was to go for his mistress; he was therefore dressed, and had only laid down for a short nap.

"Put the horses to the carriage," repeated Lord Elliot.

The coachman, raising his lamp, threw a full glare of light upon the stranger.

"I do not know you," said he, roughly; "I receive orders from no one but my mistress."

For answer, Lord Elliot drew from his breast a pocket pistol.

"If you are not ready in five minutes, I will shoot you through the head," said Lord Elliot, quietly, tapping the trigger.

"For God's sake, obey him, John," cried the nurse; "it is his excellency Lord Elliot!"

In five minutes the carriage was ready, owing much more to the loaded pistol still in Lord Elliot's hand than to the conviction that this strange, angry-looking man was his master.

"To the depot!" cried Lord Elliot, placing the child and nurse in the carriage, then jumping in after them—"to the depot in all haste!"

They reached the building in a few minutes. There stood the horses in readiness, and beside them Lord Elliot's servant, with his baggage. He sprang from the carriage, and, giving the coachman a *douceur*, ordered him to loosen the horses and return home with them.

"But, your honor," stammered the mystified coachman, "how am I to call for my lady if you take the carriage?"

"My lady can wait," said Lord Elliot, jeeringly. "If she reproaches you, tell her that Lord Elliot wishes to be remembered to her; that he will return in eight days with her carriage."

"But she will dismiss me from her service, my lord."

"Wait patiently for eight days, and then you shall enter mine. And now, away with you!"

The coachman dared not answer, and soon disappeared with his horses.

The fresh horses were put to the carriage, the servant swung himself up to his seat; Lord Elliot stood in front of the carriage with his friend Dr. Blitz.

"All has happened as I desired," said he. "I take my child away with me, and, with God's will, she shall never know but that death deprived her of her mother. Poor child! she has no mother, but I will love her with all the strength of a father, all the tenderness of a mother, and I have a noble sister who will guard and watch over her. She awaits me at Kiel. I accompany my child so far, but as soon as she is in the faithful hands of my sister, as soon as I have placed them upon the ship sailing for Copenhagen, I return here."

"Why should you return, my lord?" said the doctor, in terror. "Is it not sufficient that you have deprived the mother of her child? that you have branded the woman with shame before the whole world? What more would you do, my lord?"

With a strange smile, Lord Elliot laid his hand upon the doctor's shoulder.

"Flows there milk instead of blood in your veins, man? or have you forgotten that I have been hit by a poisoned arrow? I must be revenged, if I would not die of this wound."

"Let your wounds bleed, my lord—the longer they bleed, the sooner they will heal. But why destroy the arrow that wounded you? Will you recover the sooner or suffer the less?"

"Again I ask you, is there milk instead of blood in your veins? My honor is stained—I must cleanse it with the blood of my enemy."

"A duel, then, my lord? You will suffer chance to decide your most holy and sacred interests—your honor and life? And if chance is against you? If you fall, instead of your adversary?"

"Then, my friend, God will have decided it, and I shall thank Him for relieving me from a life which will from henceforth be a heavy burden to me. Farewell, doctor. I will be with you in eight days, and will again need your assistance."

"It is then irrevocable, my lord?"

"Irrevocable, doctor."

"I shall be ready. God grant that if this sad drama is to end in blood, it may not be yours!"

They pressed each other's hands tenderly. Lord Elliot sprang into the carriage, the coachman whipped his horses, and the carriage in which were the unfortunate man and the stolen child rolled merrily along the deserted streets.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCOVERY.

Prince Henry stood at the window and looked down into the garden. He saw his wife walking in the park with her ladies, and enjoying the clear, cool winter day; he heard their gay and merry laughter, but he felt no wish to join them and share their mirth.

Since that day in the wood, a change had come upon the prince—a dark, despairing, melancholy had taken possession of him, but he would not let it be seen; he forced himself to a noisy gayety, and in the presence of his wife he was the same tender, devoted, complaisant lover he had been before; but the mask under which he

concealed his dislike and scorn was a cruel torture and terrible agony; when he heard her laugh he felt as if a sharp dagger had wounded him; when he touched her hand, he could with difficulty suppress a cry of pain; but he conquered himself, and kept his grief and jealousy down, down in his heart. It was possible he was mistaken. It was possible his wife was innocent; that his friend was true. His own heart wished this so earnestly; his noble and great soul rebelled at the thought of despising those whom he had once loved and trusted so fully. He wished to believe that he had had a hurtful dream; that a momentary madness had darkened his brain; he would rather distrust all his reflections than to believe that this woman, whom he had loved with all the strength of his nature, this man whom he had confided in so entirely, had deceived and betrayed him. It was too horrible to doubt the noblest and most beautiful, the holiest and gentlest—to be so confounded, so uncertain in his best and purest feelings. He could not banish doubt from his heart; like a death-worm, it was gnawing day and night, destroying his vitality—poisoning every hour of the day, and even in his dreams uttering horrible words of mockery. Since the *fête* in the wood he had been observant, he had watched every glance, listened to every word; but he had discovered nothing. Both appeared unembarrassed and innocent; perhaps they dissembled; perhaps they had seen him as he lay before the hut, and knew that he had been since that day following and observing them, and by their candor and simplicity they would disarm his suspicions and lull his distrust to sleep. This thought kept him ever on his guard; he would, he must know if he had been betrayed; he must have absolute certainty. He stood concealed behind the curtains of his window, and looked down into the garden. His eyes were fixed with a glowing, consuming expression upon the princess, who, with one of her ladies, now passed before his window and looked up, but she could not see him; he was completely hidden behind the heavy silk curtains.

The princess passed on, convinced that if her husband had been in his room, he would have come forward to greet her.

The prince wished her to come to this conclusion. "Now," thought he, "she feels secure; she does not suspect I am observing her, at last I may find an opportunity to become convinced."

Count Kalkreuth was there; he had gone down into the garden. He advanced to meet the princess, they greeted each other, but in their simple, accustomed manner, he, the count, respectfully and ceremoniously—the princess dignified, careless, and condescending. And now they walked near each other, chatting, laughing, charmingly vivacious, and excited by their conversation.

The prince stood behind his curtain with a loudly-beating heart,

breathless from anxiety; they came nearer; she led the way to the little lake whose smooth and frozen surface shone like a mirror. The count pointed to the lake, and seemed to ask a question; the princess nodded affirmatively, and turning to her ladies, she spoke a few words; they bowed and withdrew.

"They are going to skate," murmured the prince. "She has sent her ladies to bring her skates; she wishes to be alone with the count."

Breathless, almost in death-agony, he watched them; they stood on the borders of the lake, and talked quietly. The expressions of their countenances were unchanged, calm, and friendly; they were certainly speaking of indifferent things. But what means that? The princess dropped her handkerchief, seemingly by accident. The count raised it and handed it to her; she took it and thanked him smilingly, then in a few moments she put her hand, with a sudden movement, under her velvet mantle. The prince cried out; he had seen something white in her hand which she concealed in her bosom.

"A letter! a letter!" cried he, in a heart-breaking tone, and like a madman pursued by furies, he rushed out.

The Princess Wilhelmina was in the act of having her skates fastened on by her maid, when Prince Henry advanced with hasty steps from the alley which led to the lake.

Count Kalkreuth advanced to meet him, and greeted him with gay, jesting words; but the prince had no word of reply for him; he passed him silently, with a contemptuous glance, and stepped directly in front of the princess, who looked up with a kindly smile. He said:

"Madame, it is too cold and rough to skate to-day; I will have the honor to conduct you to your rooms."

Princess Wilhelmina laughed heartily. "It is a fresh, invigorating winter day, my husband. If you are cold, it is not the fault of the weather, but of your light clothing. I pray you to send for your furs, and then we will run a race over the ice and become warm."

Prince Henry did not answer. He seized the arm of the princess and placed it in his own. "Come, madame, I will conduct you to your apartment."

Wilhelmina gazed at him with astonishment, but she read in his excited and angry countenance that she must not dare oppose him. "Permit me, at least, to have my skates removed," said she, shortly, giving a sign to her maid. The prince stood near, while her maid knelt before her and removed the skates. Count Kalkreuth was at some distance.

Not one word interrupted the portentous silence. Once the prince uttered a hasty and scornful exclamation. He had intercepted a glance which the princess exchanged with Count Kalkreuth, and a glance full of significance and meaning.

"What is the matter with you, prince?" said Wilhelmina.

"I am cold," said he roughly, but the perspiration was standing in large drops on his forehead.

When the skates were taken off, the prince drew his wife on quickly, without a word or greeting to his friend. Kalkreuth stood pale and immovable, and gazed thoughtfully upon the glittering ice. "I fear he knows all," murmured he. "Oh my God, my God! Why will not the earth open and swallow me up? I am a miserable, guilty wretch, and in his presence I must cast my eyes with shame to the ground. I have deceived, betrayed him, and yet I love him. Woe is me!" He clasped his hands wildly over his face, as if he would hide from daylight and the glad sun the blush of shame which burned upon his cheeks; then slowly, with head bowed down, he left the garden.

The prince, during this time, had walked rapidly on with his wife; no word was exchanged between them. Only once, when he felt her arm trembling, he turned and said harshly:

"Why do you tremble?"

"It is cold!" said she, monotonously.

"And yet," said he, laughing derisively, "it is such lovely, invigorating weather."

They went onward silently; they entered the castle and ascended the steps to the apartment of the princess. Now they were in her cabinet—in this quiet, confidential family room, where Prince Henry had passed so many happy hours with his beloved Wilhelmina. Now he stood before her, with a cold, contemptuous glance, panting for breath, too agitated to speak.

The princess was pale as death; unspeakable anguish was written in her face. She dared not interrupt this fearful silence, and appeared to be only occupied in arranging her toilet; she took off her hat and velvet mantle.

"Madame," said the prince at last, gasping at every word, "I am here to make a request of you!"

Wilhelmina bowed coldly and ceremoniously. "You have only to command, my husband!"

"Well, then," said he, no longer able to maintain his artificial composure, "I command you to show me the letter you have hidden in your bosom."

"What letter, prince?" stammered she, stepping back alarmed.

"The letter which Count Kalkreuth gave you in the garden. Do

not utter a falsehood; do not dare to deny it. I am not in a mood to be restrained by any earthly consideration."

As he stood thus, opposed to her, with flashing eyes, with trembling lips, and his arm raised threateningly, Wilhelmina felt that it would be dangerous, indeed impossible to make any opposition. She knew that the decisive moment had arrived, the veil must be lifted, and that deception was no longer possible.

"The letter! give me the letter!" cried the prince, with a menacing voice.

Wilhelmina gazed at him steadily, with eyes full of scorn and hatred.

"Here it is," taking the letter calmly from her bosom, and handing it to the prince.

He snatched it like a tiger about to tear his prey to pieces; but when he had opened it and held it before him, the paper trembled so in his hands, he was scarcely able to read it. Once he murmured: "Ah! he dares to say *thou* to you; he calls you his 'adored Wilhelmina!'" He read on, groaning, sometimes crying out aloud, then muttering wild imprecations.

The princess stood in front of him, pale as death, trembling in every limb; her teeth were chattering, and she was forced to lean against her chair to keep from falling.

When the prince had finished reading the letter, he crushed it and thrust it in his bosom, then fixed his eyes upon his wife with an expression of such intense, unspeakable misery, that the princess felt her heart moved to its profoundest depths.

"Oh, my husband," she said, "curse me!—murder me!—but do not look upon me thus." She then sank as if pressed down by an invisible power, to her knees, and raised her hands to him imploringly.

The prince laughed coarsely, and stepped back. "Rise, madame," said he, "we are not acting a comedy—it is only your husband who is speaking with you. Rise, madame, and give me the key to your secretary. You will understand that after having read this letter I desire to see the others. As your husband, I have at least the right to know how much confidence you have placed in your lover, and how far you return his passion."

"You despise me," cried Wilhelmina, bursting into tears.

"I think I am justified in doing so," said he, coldly. "Stand up, and give me the key."

She rose and staggered to the table. "Here is the key."

The prince opened the secretary. "Where are the letters, madame?"

"In the upper drawer to the left."

"Ah," said he, with a rude laugh, "not even in a secret compart-

ment have you guarded these precious letters. You were so sure of my blind confidence in you that you did not even conceal your jewels."

Princess Wilhelmina did not answer, but as the prince read one after the other of the letters, she sank again upon her knees. "My God, my God!" murmured she, "have pity upon me! Send Thy lightning and crush me. Oh, my God! why will not the earth cover me and hide me from his glance!"

Rivers of tears burst from her eyes, and raising her arms to heaven, she uttered prayers of anguish and repentance.

The prince read on, on, in these unholy lettters. Once he exclaimed aloud, and rushed with the letter to the princess.

"Is this true?" said he—"is this which you have written, true?"

"What? Is what true?" said Wilhelmina, rising slowly from her knees.

"He thanks you in this letter for having written to him that you have never loved any man but himself—him—Kalkreuth alone! Did you write the truth?"

"I wrote it, and it is the truth," said the princess, who had now fully recovered her energy and her composure. "Yes, sir, I have loved no one but Kalkreuth alone. I could not force my heart to love you—you who in the beginning disdained me, then one day in an idle mood were pleased to love me, to offer me your favor. I was no slave to be set aside when you were in the humor, and to count myself blessed amongst women when you should find me worthy of your high regard. I was a-free born woman, and as I could not give my hand to him I loved, I gave my heart—that heart which you rejected. You have the right to kill me, but not to despise me—to dishonor me."

"Do I dishonor you when I speak the truth?" cried the prince.

"You do not speak the truth. I have sinned heavily against you. I suffered your love—I could not return it. I had not the courage when I saw you, who had so long disdained me, lying at my feet, declaring your passion and imploring my love in return, to confess to you that I could never love you—that my heart was no longer free. This is my crime—this alone. I could not force my heart to love you, but I could be faithful to my duty, and I have been so. It is not necessary for me to blush and cast my eyes down before my husband. My love is pure—my virtue untarnished. I have broken no faith with you."

"Miserable play on words!" said the prince. "You have been a hypocrite—your crime is twofold: you have sinned against me—you have sinned against your love. You have been a base coward who had not the courage to do justice to the feelings of your own

heart. What mean you by saying you have broken no faith with me? You have acted a daily lie. Oh, madame, how have I loved you! Both body and soul were lost in that wild love. When you stood with your lover and listened well pleased to those glowing confessions of his sinful love, you excused yourself and thought, forsooth, you were breaking no faith. You have defrauded me of the woman I loved and the friend whom I trusted. May God curse you, even as I do! May Heaven chastise you, even as I shall!"

He raised both his hands over her as if he would call down Heaven's curse upon her guilty head, then turned and left the room.

CHAPTER XII.

A MORNING AT SANS-SOUCI.

It was five o'clock in the morning. Deep silence reigned, the darkness of night still encompassed the world, the weary might still sleep and rest, life had recommenced nowhere, nowhere except at Sans-Souci, nowhere except in the apartment of the king; while his people slept, the king watched, he watched to work and think for his people. Without the wind howled and blew the snow against his window, and made even the fire in his room flicker; but the king heeded it not. He had completed his toilet and drunk his chocolate; now he was working. It did not disturb him that his room was cold, that the candle on his table gave but a poor light, and even seemed to increase the appearance of discomfort in his apartment; it gave sufficient light to enable him to read the letters which lay upon his table, and which had arrived the previous day. His ministers might sleep—the king waked and worked. He read every letter and petition, and wrote a few words of answer on the margin of each. After reading all business communications, the king took his own letters, those that were addressed to him personally, and came from his absent friends. His countenance, which before was grave and determined, assumed a soft and gentle expression, and a smile played upon his lips. The receipts for to-day were small. There were but few letters, and the large proportion of them came from relations of the king, or from distant acquaintances.

"No letter from D'Argens," said the king, smiling. "My ecclesiastic letter has accomplished the desired end, and the good marquis will arrive here to-day to rail at, and then forgive me. Ah, here is a letter from D'Alembert. Well, this is doubtless an agreeable letter, for it will inform me that D'Alembert accepts my pro-

posal, and has decided to become the president of my Academy of Science."

He hastily broke the seal, and while he read a dark cloud overshadowed his brow. "He declines my offer," he said, discontentedly. "His pride consists in a disregard for princes; he wishes posterity to admire him for his unselfishness. Oh, he does not yet know posterity. She will either be utterly silent on this subject or, should it be spoken of, it will be considered an act of folly which D'Alembert committed. He is a proud and haughty man, as they all are." He again took the letter and read it once more, but more slowly and more carefully than before; gradually the clouds disappeared from his brow, and his eyes beamed with pleasure.

"No," he said; "I have misjudged D'Alembert. My displeasure at a disappointed hope blinded me; D'Alembert is not a small, vain man, but a free and great spirit. He now refuses my presidency, with a salary of six thousand thalers, as he last year refused the position of tutor to the heir of the throne of Russia, with a salary of a hundred thousand francs. He prefers to be poor and needy, and to live up five flights of stairs, and be his own master, than to live in a palace as the servant of a prince. I cannot be angry with him, for he has thought and acted as a wise man; and were I not Frederick, I would gladly be D'Alembert. I will not love him less because he has refused my offer. Ah, it is a real pleasure to know that there are still men who are independent enough to exercise their will and judgment in opposition to the king. Princes would be more noble, if those with whom they associated were not so miserable and shallow-hearted. D'Alembert shall be a lesson and a consolation to me; there are still men who are not deceivers and flatterers, fools and betrayers, but really men."

He carefully refolded the letter, and, before placing it in his portfolio, nodded to it as pleasantly as if it had been D'Alembert himself. He then took another letter.

"I do not recognize this writing," he said, as he examined the address. "It is from Switzerland, and is directed to me personally. From whom is it?"

He opened the letter, and glanced first at the signature.

"Ah," he said, "from Jean Jacques Rousseau! I promised him an asylum. The free Switzers persecuted the unhappy philosopher, and my good Lord Marshal prayed my assistance for him. Lord Marshal is now in Scotland, and it will not benefit him to have his friend here. Well, perhaps it may lead to his return, if he hopes to find Rousseau here. I must see what the philosopher says."

The letter contained only a few lines, which the king read with utter astonishment.

"*Vraiment!*" he exclaimed; "philosophers all belong to the devil. This Jean Jacques does not content himself with declining my offer, but he does it in an unheard-of manner. This is a work of art; I must read it again."

The king read aloud in a most pathetic voice: "Votre majesté m'offre un asyle, et m'y prome la liberté; mais vous avez une epée, et vous êtes roi. Vous m'offrez une pension, à moi, qui n'a rien fait pour vous. Mais en avez-vous donné à tous les braves gens qui ont perdu bras et jambes en vos services?"

"Well," said the king, laughing, "if being a ruffian makes one a philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau deserves to be called the greatest philosopher in the world. Truly, Fortune is playing curious pranks with me to-day, and seems determined to lower my royal pride. Two refusals at one time; two philosophers who decline my invitation. No, not two philosophers—D'Alembert is a philosopher, but Rousseau is in truth a fool."

He tore this letter, and threw the pieces in the fire. He then seized another letter, but laid it down again before opening it. He had heard the great clock in the hall strike eight. That was the sign that the business of the day, which he shared with his attendants, should begin, and that the king had no more time to devote to his private correspondence. The last stroke of the clock had scarcely sounded, as a light knock was heard at the door, which was instantly opened by the command of the king.

Baron von Kircheisen, the prefect of Berlin, entered the room. He came to make his weekly report to the king. His respectful greeting was returned merely by a dark side-glance, and the king listened to his report with evident displeasure.

"And that is your entire report?" asked his majesty, when the prefect had finished. "You are the head of police for the city of Berlin, and you have nothing more to tell me than any policemen might know. You inform me of the number of arrivals and departures, of the births and deaths, and of the thefts which have been committed, and that is the extent of your report."

"But I cannot inform your majesty of things that have not occurred," returned Baron von Kircheisen.

"So nothing else has occurred in Berlin. Berlin is then a most quiet, innocent city, where at the worst a few greatly-to-be-pitied individuals occasionally disturb the repose of the righteous by mistaking the property of others for their own. You know nothing. You do not know that Berlin is the most vicious and immoral of cities. You can tell me nothing of the crimes which are certainly not of a kind to be punished by the law, but which are creeping from house to house, poisoning the happiness of entire families, and

spreading shame and misery on every hand. You know nothing of the many broken marriage-vows, of the dissension in families, of the frivolity of the young people who have given themselves up to gambling and dissipation of all kinds. Much misery might be avoided if you knew more of these matters, and were ready with a warning at the right moment."

"Sire, will you permit me to say that is not the task of the ordinary police; for such matters a secret police is required."

"Well, why do you not have a secret police? Why do you not follow the example of the new minister of police at Paris, De Sartines? That man knows every thing that happens in Paris. He knows the history of every house, every family, and every individual. He occasionally warns the men when their wives are on the point of flying from them. He whispers to the wives the names of those who turn their husbands from them. He shows the parents the faro-bank at which their sons are losing their property, and sometimes extends a hand to save them from destruction. That is a good police, and it must be acknowledged that yours does not resemble it."

"If your majesty desires it, I can establish such a police in Berlin as De Sartines has in Paris. But your majesty must do two things: First, you must give me a million of thalers annually."

"Ah! a million! Your secret police is rather expensive. Continue. What do you desire besides the million?"

"Secondly, the permission to destroy the peace of families, the happiness of your subjects—to make the son a spy upon his father—the mother an informer against her daughter—the students and servants the betrayers of their teachers and employers. If your majesty will permit me to undermine the confidence of man to his fellow-man—of the brother to his sister—of the parents to their children—of the husbands to their wives by buying their secrets from them—if I may reward such treachery, then, your majesty, we can have such a police as De Sartines has in Paris. But I do not think that it will promote propriety or prevent crime."

The king had listened to him with increasing interest, his brow growing clearer and clearer as the bold speaker continued. When he finished, the king ceased his walk, and stood motionless before him, looking fully into his excited countenance.

"It is, then, your positive conviction that a secret police brings with it those evils you have depicted?"

"Yes, your majesty, it is my positive conviction."

"He may be right," said the king, thoughtfully. "Nothing demoralizes men so much as spies and denunciations, and a good government should punish and not reward the miserable spies who

betray their fellow-creatures for gold with the wicked intention of bringing them into misfortune. A good government should not follow the Jesuits' rule—'That the end consecrates the means.'"

"Will your majesty, then, graciously allow me to dispense with a secret police?"

"Well, yes. We will remain as we are, and De Sartines may keep his secret police. It would not suit us, and Berlin shall not be still further demoralized by spies and betrayers. Therefore, no more of the secret police. When crime shows itself by day we will punish it. We will leave it to Providence to bring it to light. Continue to report to me, therefore, who has died and who has been born; who have arrived and who have departed; who has stolen and who has done a good business. I am well pleased with you —you have spoken freely and bravely, and said openly what you thought. That pleases me; I am pleased when my agents have the courage to speak the truth, and dare occasionally to oppose me. I hope you will retain this virtue."

He bowed pleasantly to the prefect, and offered him his hand. He then dismissed him, and ordered the ministers to enter with their reports and proposals. After these came the council, and only after the king had worked with them uninterruptedly for three hours, did he think of taking some repose from all this work, which had occupied him from six o'clock in the morning until nearly twelve. He was on the point of entering his library as loud voices in the anteroom arrested his attention.

"But I tell you that the king gives no audiences to-day," he heard one of the servants say.

"The king has said that every man who wishes to speak to him shall be admitted!" exclaimed another voice. "I must speak to the king, and he must hear me."

"If you must speak to him, you must arrange it by writing. The king grants an audience to all who demand it, but he fixes the hour himself."

"Misery and despair cannot await a fixed hour!" cried the other. "If the king will not listen to unhappiness when it calls to him for redress, but waits until it pleases him to hear, he is not a good king."

"The man is right," said the king, "I will listen to him immediately."

He hastily advanced to the door and opened it. Without stood an old man, poorly dressed, with a pale, thin face, from whose features despair and sorrow spoke plainly enough to be understood by all. When his great, sunken eyes fell upon the king, he cried, joyfully, "God be thanked, there is the king!"

The king motioned to him to approach, and the old man sprang forward with a cry of delight.

"Come into the room," said the king; "and now tell me what you wish from me?"

"Justice, your majesty, nothing but justice. I have been through the war, and I am without bread. I have nothing to live upon, and I have twice petitioned your majesty for a situation which is now vacant."

"And I refused it to you, because I had promised it to another."

"They told me that your majesty would refuse me this situation," cried the man, despairingly. "But I cannot believe it, for your majesty owes it to me, and you are usually a just king. Hasten, your majesty, to perform your duty, and justify yourself from a suspicion which is unworthy of your kingly fame."

The king measured him with a flashing glance, which the pale, despairing suppliant bore with bold composure.

"By what authority," asked the king, in a thundering voice, as he approached the man, with his arm raised threateningly—"by what authority do you dare speak to me in such a tone? and on what do you ground your shameless demands?"

"On this, your majesty, that I must starve if you refuse my request. That is the most sacred of all claims, and to whom on earth dare I turn with it if not to my king?"

There lay in these words a sorrow so heart-breaking, a plaint so despairing in the voice, that the king was involuntarily much moved. He let fall his uplifted arm, and the expression of his countenance became gentle and tender.

"I see that you are very unhappy and despairing," he said, kindly; "you were right to come to me. You shall have the place for which you asked. I will arrange it. Come here to-morrow to the Councillor Muller. I will give you some money, that you may not starve until then."

He silenced the delighted man's expressions of gratitude, and ringing his bell he summoned Deesen, who kept his purse, in order to give the man a gold piece. But Deesen did not appear, and the second chamberlain announced in an embarrassed manner that he was not in the palace. The king commanded him to give the man the promised gold piece and then to return to him.

"Where is Deesen?" asked the king, as the chamberlain returned.

"Sire, I do not know," he stammered, his eyes sinking beneath the piercing glance of the king.

"You do know!" said the king, gravely. "Deesen has positive orders from me to remain in the anteroom, because I might need

him. If he dares to disobey my orders, he must have a powerful reason, and you know it. Out with it! I will know it."

"If your majesty commands, I must speak," said the chamberlain, sighing. "Your majesty will not permit us to be married, but we were made with hearts, and we sometimes fall in love."

"Deesen is in love, then?" said the king.

"Yes, your majesty, he loves a beautiful girl in Potsdam, whose name is Maria Siegert. And although he cannot marry her, she has consented to be his beloved. And as to-day was the great report day, Deesen thought that your majesty would not need him, and that he had time to go to Potsdam to visit his sweetheart. He seems to have been delayed. That is the reason, your majesty, that Deesen is not in the anteroom."

"Very well," said the king; "as soon as Deesen returns he must come to my library. I forbid you, however, to repeat one word of this conversation."

"Ah, your majesty, I am well pleased that I need not do it, for Deesen is very passionate, and if he learns that I have betrayed his secret he is capable of giving me a box on the ear."

"Which would, perhaps, be very wholesome for you," said the king, as he turned toward his library.

A quarter of an hour later, Deesen entered the library with a heated, anxious face.

The king, who was reading his beloved Lucretius while he paced the floor, turned his great, piercing eyes with a questioning expression on the anxious face of his attendant. "I called for you, and you did not come," said the king.

"I beg your majesty to pardon me," stammered Deesen.

"Where were you?"

"I was in my room writing a letter, sire."

"Ah, a letter. You were no doubt writing to that beautiful barmaid at the hotel of the Black Raven at Amsterdam, who declined the attentions of the servant of the brothers Zoller."

This reference to the journey to Amsterdam showed Deesen that the king was not very angry. He dared, therefore, to raise his eyes to those of the king, and to look pleadingly at him.

"Sit down," said the king, pointing to the writing-table. "I called you because I wished to dictate a letter for you to write. Sit down and take a pen."

Deesen seated himself at the table, and the king began walking up and down as before, his hands and book behind him.

"Are you ready?" asked the king.

"I am ready, sire," returned Deesen, dipping his pen into the ink.

"Write then," commanded the king, as he placed himself immediately in front of Deesen—"write, then, first the heading: 'My beloved—'"

Deesen started, and glanced inquiringly at the king. Frederick looked earnestly at him, and repeated, 'My beloved—'"

Deesen uttered a sigh, and wrote.

"Have you written that?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire, I have it—'My beloved.'"

"Well, then, proceed. 'My beloved, that old bear, the king—' Write," said the king, interrupting himself as he saw that Deesen grew pale and trembled, and could scarcely hold the pen—"write without hesitation, or expect a severe punishment."

"Will your majesty have the kindness to dictate? I am ready to write every thing," said Deesen, as he wiped his brow.

"Now then, quickly," ordered the king, and he dictated—'That old bear, the king, counts every hour against me that I spend so charmingly with you. That my absence may be shorter in the future, and less observed by the old scold, I wish you to rent a room near here in the suburbs of Brandenburg, where we can meet more conveniently than in the city. I remain yours until death.

"'DEESEN.'

"Have you finished?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire, I have finished," groaned Deesen.

"Then fold the letter and seal it, and write the address 'To the unmarried Maria Siegert, Yunker Street, Potsdam.'"

"Mercy, sire, mercy!" cried Deseen, springing up and throwing himself at the feet of the king. "I see that your majesty knows all—that I have been betrayed."

"You have betrayed yourself, for to-day is the tenth time that I have called for you when you were absent. Now send your letter off, and see that your Siegert gets a room here. If, however, you are again absent when I call, I will send your beautiful Maria to Spandau, and dismiss you. Go, now, and dispatch your letter."

Deesen hurried off, and the king looked smilingly after him for a moment, and was on the point of returning to his reading, when his attention was attracted by the approach of a carriage.

"Ah," he murmured anxiously, "I fear that I shall be disturbed again by some cousin, who has come to rob me of my time by hypocritical professions of love."

He looked anxiously toward the door. It was soon opened, and a servant announced Prince Henry.

The king's countenance cleared, and he advanced to meet his brother with a bright smile. But his greeting was not returned, and the prince did not appear to see the extended hand of the king.

A heavy cloud lay upon his brow—his cheeks were colorless and his lips compressed, as if he wished to suppress the angry and indignant words which his flashing eyes expressed.

"Ah, my brother," said the king, sadly, "it seems that you have come to announce a misfortune."

"No," said the prince, "I only came, your majesty, to recall a conversation which I held with you ten years ago in this same room, on this very spot."

"Ten years ago?" said the king. "That was at the time of your marriage, Henry."

"Yes, the conversation I refer to concerned my marriage, sire. You had pursued me so long with that subject, that I had at length concluded to submit to the yoke which was to free me from those unworthy and humiliating persecutions."

"I think that you could select more fitting expressions, my brother," said the king, with flashing eyes. "You forget that you are speaking to your king."

"But I remember that I am speaking to my brother, whose duty is to hear the complaints which I have to utter against the king."

"Speak," said the king, after a slight pause. "Your brother will hear you."

"I come to remind you of that hour," said the prince, solemnly, "in which I gave my consent to be married. As I did so, sire, I said to you that I should hold you responsible for this marriage which was made for political purposes and not from love—that I would call you to account before the throne of God, and there ask you by what right you robbed me of my liberty, by what right you laid a chain upon my hand and heart which love could not help me to bear. I said further, sire—if the weight of this chain should become too heavy, and this unnatural connection of a marriage without love should drive me to despair, that upon your head would rest the curse of my misery, and that you would be answerable for my destroyed existence, for my perished hopes."

"And I," said the king, "I took this responsibility upon me. As your king and your elder brother, I reminded you of your duty to give the state a family—sons who would be an example of courage and honor to the men, and daughters who would be a pattern of virtue and propriety to the women. In view of these duties, I demanded of you to be married."

"I come now to call you to account for this marriage," exclaimed the prince, solemnly. "I have come to tell you that my heart is torn with pain and misery; that I am the most wretched of men, and that you have made me so—you, who forced me into this marriage, although you knew the shame and despair of a marriage

without love. You had already taken a heavy responsibility upon yourself by your own marriage; and if you were compelled to endure it so long as my father lived, you should have relieved yourself from it so soon as you were free; that is, so soon as you were king. But you preferred to continue in this unnatural connection, or rather you put the chains from your hands, and let them drag at your feet. Not to outrage the world by your divorce, you gave it the bad example of a wretched marriage. You made yourself free, and you made a slave of your poor wife, who has been a martyr to your humors and cruelty. You profaned the institution of marriage. You gave a bad and dangerous example to your subjects, and it has done its work. Look around in your land, sire. Everywhere you will see unhappy women who have been deserted by their husbands, and miserable men who have been dishonored by their faithless wives. Look at your own family. Our sister of Baireuth died of grief, and of the humiliation she endured from the mistress of her husband. Our brother, Augustus William, died solitary and alone. He withdrew in his grief to Oranienburg, and his wife remained in Berlin. She was not with him when he died; strangers received his last breath—strangers closed his eyes. Our sister of Anspach quarrelled with her husband, until finally she submitted, and made a friend of his mistress. And I, sire, I also stand before you with the brand of shame upon my brow. I also have been betrayed and deceived, and all this is your work. If the king mocks at the sacred duties of marriage, how can he expect that his family and subjects should respect them? It is the fashion in your land for husbands and wives to deceive one another, and it is you who have set this fashion."

"I have allowed you to finish, Henry," said the king, when the prince was at length silent. "I have allowed you to finish, but I have not heard your angry and unjust reproaches. I have only heard that my brother is unhappy, and it is, I know, natural for the unhappy to seek the source of their sorrows in others and not in themselves. I forgive all that you have said against me; but if you hold me responsible for the miserable consequences of the war, which kept the men at a distance for years and loosened family ties, that shows plainly that your judgment is unreliable, and that you cannot discriminate with justice. I did not commence this war heedlessly; I undertook it as a heavy burden. It has made an old man of me; it has eaten up my life before my time. I see all the evil results, and I consider it my sacred duty to bind up the wounds which it has inflicted on my country. I work for this object day and night; I give all of my energies to this effort; I have sacrificed to it all my personal inclinations. But I must be contented to bind

up the wounds. I cannot make want disappear; I cannot immediately change sorrow into gladness."

"Ah, sire, you seek to avoid the subject, and to speak of the general unhappiness instead of my special grief. I call you to account, because you forced me to take a wife that I did not know —a wife who has made me the most miserable of men—a wife who has outraged my honor, and betrayed my heart. You gave me a wife who has robbed me of all I held dear on earth—of the wife I loved, and of the friend I trusted."

"Poor brother," said the king, gently, "you are enduring the torments from which I also suffered, before my heart became hardened as it now is. Yes, it is a fearful pain to be forced to despise the friend that you trusted—to be betrayed by those we have loved. I have passed through that grief. The man suffered deeply in me before his existence was merged in that of the king."

"Sire," said the prince, suddenly, "I have come to you to demand justice and punishment. You have occasioned the misery of my house, it is therefore your duty to alleviate it, as far as in you lies. I accuse my wife, the Princess Wilhelmina, of infidelity and treachery. I accuse Count Kalkreuth, who dares to love my wife, of being a traitor to your royal family. I demand your consent to my divorce from the princess, and to the punishment of the traitor. That is the satisfaction which I demand of your majesty for the ruin which you have wrought in my life."

"You wish to make me answerable for the capriciousness of woman and the faithlessness of man," asked the king, with a sad smile. "You do that because I, in performing my duty as a king, forced you to marry. It is true you did not love your intended wife, because you did not know her, but you learned to love her. That proves that I did not make a bad choice; your present pain is a justification for me. You are unhappy because you love the wife I gave you with your whole heart. For the capriciousness of women you cannot hold me responsible, and I did not select the friend who has so wickedly betrayed you. You demand of me that I should punish both. Have you considered, my brother, that in punishing them I should make your disgrace and misery public to the world? Do not imagine, Henry, that men pity us for our griefs; when they seem most deeply to sympathize with us they feel an inward pleasure, especially if it is a prince who suffers. It pleases men that fate, which has given us an exceptional position, does not spare us the ordinary sorrows of humanity."

"I understand, then, that you refuse my request," said the prince. "You will not consent to my divorce, you will not punish the traitor?"

"No, I do not refuse your request, but I beg you will take three days to consider what I have said to you. At the end of that time, should you come to me, and make the same demand, I will give my consent; that is, I will have you publicly separated from your wife, I will have Count Kalkreuth punished, and will thus give the world the right to laugh at the hero of Freiburg."

"Very well, sire," said the prince, thoughtfully, "I will remind you of your promise. I beg you will now dismiss me, for you see I am a very man and no philosopher, unworthy to be a guest at Sans-Souci."

He bowed to the king, who tenderly pressed his hand and silently left the room.

Frederick looked after him with an expression of unutterable pity.

"Three days will be long enough to deaden his pain, and then he will be more reasonable and form other resolutions."

CHAPTER XIII.

A HUSBAND'S REVENGE.

CAMILLA lay upon a sofa in her boudoir, and listened with breathless attention to the account her *beau cousin* gave of the adventures of the last eight days. She listened with sparkling eyes to the witty description he gave of his duel with Lord Elliot, and declared that she found him extraordinarily brilliant. Camilla was indeed proud of her handsome lover. Kindar explained minutely how he had compelled Lord Elliot, who for a long time avoided and fled from him, to fight a duel with him. How he forced him on his knees to acknowledge that he had done his wife injustice, and to apologize for the insult he had offered to Kindar, in charging him with being the lover of his pure and virtuous wife.

"And he did this?" cried Camilla; "he knelt before you and begged your pardon?"

"Yes, he knelt before me, and begged my pardon."

"Then he is even more pitiful than I thought him," said Camilla, "and I am justified before the whole world in despising him. Nothing can be more contemptible than to beg pardon rather than fight a duel, to kneel to a man to save one's miserable life. I am a woman, but I would scorn such cowardice. I would despise the man I loved most fondly if he were guilty of such an act of shame."

Camilla was much excited; she did not notice how Kindar started, turned pale, and fixed his eyes on the floor. She was so charmed

with the courage of her *beau cousin* that she could think of nothing else. Even her frivolous nature had this feminine instinct—she prized personal daring and courage in a man more than all other things; of strength of mind she knew nothing, and therefore she could not appreciate it, but she demanded courage, dignity, and strength of *physique*. She laid her hands upon her cousin with cordial approbation, and gazed lovingly at him.

"You are as beautiful as a hero and a demigod, and it seems to me I never loved you so fondly as at this moment, when you stand before me as the victor over my cowardly husband. Ah, I wish I could have witnessed that scene; you proud and grand, and he lying trembling like this miserable *windspiel* at your feet, repeating the words of retraction and repentance which you dictated."

"It was indeed worth seeing," said Kindar; "but let us speak now of something more important, dear Camilla. You must leave Berlin to-day, and for a few weeks at least withdraw to your estate, till the violence of the storm has blown over. It is, of course, most agreeable and flattering to me to have my name coupled with that of so lovely and charming a woman—to be looked upon with jealousy and alarm by the cowardly husbands of Berlin. It will not, however, be agreeable to you to be torn to pieces by slanderous tongues. Every old maid, every prude, and every hypocritical coquette (and of such base elements the feminine world is composed), will find this a happy occasion to exalt her own modesty and virtue, and denounce and condemn you."

"Not so," said Camilla, proudly, "I will remain in Berlin. I have courage to defy the whole world for your sake—I will remain to prove that I am not ashamed of my love. The whole world shall know that the brave and handsome Kindar, the beloved of all women, is my lover. Ah, cousin, you merit this compensation at my hands; you defended my honor against the aspersions of my husband, and compelled him to a shameful retraction."

"Does Baron von Kindar make this boast?" cried a voice behind her.

Camilla turned and saw Lord Elliot standing in the door; he looked at her with a cold, contemptuous glance, which wounded her far more than a spoken insult would have done.

"Why are you here, sir?" she cried. "With what right do you dare force yourself into my presence?"

Lord Elliot made no reply, but smiled coolly, and Camilla's eyes filled with tears of rage.

"Cousin," said she, turning to Kindar, "will you not free me from the presence of this contemptible creature, who dares to affront and—"

Suddenly she stopped speaking and gazed in amazement at her handsome cousin; his countenance was not serene; he was indeed livid, and stood trembling and with downcast eyes before her husband.

"Well," said Lord Elliot, raising himself proudly, "do you not hear your cousin's command? Will you not dismiss this poor creature who dares disturb this tender interview?"

"I will withdraw," stammered Kindar, "I am *de trop*. I have no right to interfere between Lord Elliot and his wife. I take my leave."

He tried to step through the door, but the powerful hand of Lord Elliot held him back.

"Not so, my handsome gentleman," said Lord Elliot, with a hoarse laugh, "you are by no means *de trop;* on the contrary, I desire your presence; you will remain here and listen to the charming and merry narrative I am about to relate to Lady Elliot. I have come, madame, to give your ladyship the history of a hunt; not, however, of a chase after wild beasts, of the hart and the hare, but of an all-conquering cavalier, who, however, judging from the manner in which he fled and sought to save himself, must possess the cowardice of the hare, and the fleet foot of the hart. You know, I presume, that I speak of your *beau cousin* and myself."

While Lord Elliot spoke, Camilla stared in breathless agony at her cousin. She seemed to hope to read in his pale face the explanation of this incomprehensible riddle; she expected him to command her husband to be silent, and to offer him some new insult. But Kindar did not speak, and Camilla came to a desperate resolution. She was determined to know why he stood so pale and trembling before her husband. She would force him to an explanation.

"It is wholly unnecessary, my lord," she said, in a haughty tone, "to relate your history to me; I am acquainted with all the particulars of the chase of which you speak. I know your degradation and humiliation—I know that you fell upon your knees and pleaded for pardon when satisfaction was demanded of you."

"Ah! I see, *le beau cousin* has changed *rôles* with me," said Lord Elliot. "That was indeed most amiable. Your lover must, of course, always play the most important part, and no doubt, he thought to do me honor by this change. I cannot take advantage of this generous intention, and must correct a few errors in his narrative."

"Speak! then; speak! my lord," said Camilla, whose eyes were still fixed sternly upon her lover.

"As you graciously permit it, madame, I will give you an account of the chase. But first, madame, I must clear myself from an accu-

sation. I am suspected of having challenged Von Kindar, because he was the lover of my wife. I look upon that, however, as an accident, and nothing more. *Le beau cousin* happened to be at hand when my susceptible, ardent wife looked around for a lover, and she accepted him; he was the first, but he will not be the last. I was not driven to pursue him by jealousy. I am a true son of this enlightened age, and shall not, like the knights of the olden time, storm heaven and earth because my wife has a lover. I am a philosopher. For a noble wife, who had made me happy in her love, I might perhaps feel and act differently. I, however, married a heartless fool, and it would have been mad folly to risk my life with a brainless fop for her sake."

"Speak, cousin!" cried Camilla, springing forward, white with passion. "Speak! Do you not hear these insults?" She laid her hands upon his arm; he muttered a few incomprehensible words and tried to shake them off.

"He has heard every word," said Lord Elliot, scornfully; "but he is without doubt too polite to interrupt me. He will have the goodness still to listen silently."

Camilla let her hands fall; gnashing her teeth she turned away and seated herself upon the divan. Her lover and her husband stood before her; the one, trembling like a broken reed, leaned against the wall, the other erect and proudly conscious of his own worth and dignity.

"I said that I would not have dreamed of risking my life with a brainless fop, for the sake of a heartless fool; but this fop was guilty of another crime: he was not only the betrayer of my wife, but he was the author of a shameful and most insulting letter, which you, madame, had the effrontery to copy and send me."

"How do you know that he wrote this letter?" cried Camilla.

"In the first place, madame, you are not even capable of composing such a letter. I took the liberty of removing the original of this letter from your writing-desk. Armed with this proof, I sought *le beau cousin*, and demanded satisfaction. Lieutenant Kaphengst, a former friend of this handsome cavalier, accompanied me. When you deal with such a man as the one who stands cowering before me, witnesses are necessary. He is quite capable of denying every thing, and changing the *rôles*. The baron had left home, he had gone to Mecklenberg. Certainly he did not know that I had come to Berlin to seek him, or he would have had the courtesy to remain and receive my visit. I was too impatient to await his return, and followed his traces, even as ardently as he has followed you, madame. I found him at last, in the hotel of a little village. Like all other sentimental lovers, he longed for solitude; and, not wishing to be

disturbed in his sweet dreams, he rented the entire hotel. I was, however, bold enough to seek him—with swords and pistols—and gave him choice of weapons; he was peaceable, and refused both sword and pistol. I therefore took my third weapon, my trusty walking-stick. It was a beautiful bamboo-rod, and neither broke nor split, though I beat away valiantly on the back of the knightly cavalier."

"This cannot be true. This is a lie!" cried Camilla.

Lord Elliot raised his arm and pointed slowly to Kindar. "Ask him, madame, if this is a lie."

Camilla turned, and as her eye rested upon him, she felt that she had no need to ask the question.

Kindar leaned with pale cheek and tottering knees against the wall. He was a living picture of cowardly despair and trembling terror.

Camilla groaned aloud, and with a look of unspeakable aversion she turned from him to her husband. For the first time, she did not find him ugly. He was indeed imposing. His proud bearing, his noble intellect, and manly worth impressed her. To her he had never been but the fond, tender, yielding lover—now she saw before her the firm and angry man, and he pleased her. Kindar, who had been so handsome and so irresistible, was now hateful in her eyes.

"Go on," murmured Camilla.

"Well, I beat this man with my cane till he consented to fight with me. We had, however, played this little comedy too energetically. The people of the hotel heard the noise, and fearing some fatal result, rushed to the rescue of this handsome cavalier. We deferred the duel, therefore, till the next day, but lo! the next morning *le beau cousin* had fled. Without doubt he had forgotten our little arrangement, and his thirst to see you lured him back to Berlin. I was barbarian enough to follow him, and I swore to shoot him down like a mad dog if he did not consent to fight. This comparison was doubtless somewhat insulting, and he resolved at last to fight."

"Ah, he accepted the challenge!" cried Camilla, casting a sudden glance upon Kindar; but oh, how ugly, how pitiful, how repulsive did he now appear to her! She closed her eyes, in order not to see him.

"We rode on with our seconds and our weapons to the little village of Bernan, on the border of Saxony; but I saw, madame, that your cavalier had no inclination to fight this duel. Besides, I thought of you—of your great grief if he should fall, and thus deprive you of your pretty plaything before you had time to replace it.

You know that my heart was ever soft and compassionate. I resolved, therefore, to be merciful to *le beau cousin.* Arrived on the ground, I proposed to Kindar, instead of fighting with me, to sign a paper which I had prepared, in which he implores my pardon and my mercy, acknowledges himself to be an unworthy scoundrel and liar, and solemnly swears that every accusation he brought against me in the letter you copied was a lie—declares me to be an irreproachable cavalier, who has been deceived and betrayed by himself and Lady Elliot. Baron Kindar found this somewhat strongly expressed, and preferred to fight rather than sign it."

"God be thanked!" murmured Camilla.

"Well, we were resolved to fight, and I was obliging enough to give Kindar the first shot. He accepted this advantage readily, and I confess he aimed well. His hand trembled, and he shot too high, just over my head. Now it was my turn. I raised the pistol, and I swear to you, madame, my hand did not tremble. Perhaps Kindar noticed this—perhaps he wished to live and find a compensation in your love for the terrible torments of the last few days. It suffices to say, he called out to me not to shoot, as he was ready to sign the paper confessing he was a scoundrel and a liar. He signed it kneeling at my feet, and begging pardon. I then gave him permission to return to Berlin. For myself, I drove to Sans-Souci, asked an audience of the king, and obtained his consent to a divorce. You know, madame, that I have a soft and yielding nature. I never could refuse a wish of your heart. I therefore implored his majesty to allow of your immediate marriage with Baron Kindar."

"Never, never, will that marriage take place!" cried Camilla, springing from the divan and gazing with abhorrence upon Kindar.

"It will take place!" said Lord Elliot, firmly and imperiously; "you love him, you betrayed me for his sake—he is a base coward, despised by every man, but still you will marry him. We are divorced, and the king commands this marriage. From this hour we are nothing to each other—you are the betrothed of Baron von Kindar. Allow me to give you this paper, which he signed to save his pitiful life, as a bridal present."

He laid the paper upon the table, and bowed to Camilla, who was pale and terrified, and whose teeth chattered as if in an ague-fit.

"Madame," said Lord Elliot, "I have the honor to bid you adieu. I wish you a long and happy wedded life!"

Lord Elliot left the room and passed on to the apartment which had been his own. Every thing had been removed, all the pictures taken from the wall but one; only Camilla's portrait, taken in her bridal dress, remained. He stood long before this lovely picture,

and gazed steadily, as if to impress every lineament upon his soul. He felt that in taking leave of this painting he was bidding adieu to youth, to happiness, to all the sweet illusions of life.

"Farewell!" said he, aloud—"farewell, Camilla! my bride! the dream is over!"

He took a little knife from his pocket and cut the picture in two pieces, from the top to the bottom, then slowly descended the steps to his carriage, in which his friend, Doctor Blitz awaited him.

"I am ready, doctor, and I beg you to give me a bed in your house for the present. During the last ten days I have had a burning fever."

While Lord Elliot was driving off, Camilla and *le beau cousin* stood confronting each other; neither dared to break the fearful silence, or even to look at each other.

Suddenly the door opened, and General von Saldern, the adjutant of the king, entered the room. Camilla had not the strength to advance to meet him; she returned his salutation by a faint inclination of the head. The general did not appear to see Kindar, and made no response to his profound bow.

"Madame," said the general, solemnly, "I come at the command of the king; by his authority as king and judge, and as head of the church, he has annulled your marriage with Lord Elliot. This was done as a proof of his regard to Lord Elliot. Out of regard to your own family, he insists upon your immediate marriage with Baron Kindar, who has been dismissed from the king's service."

"No, no," cried Camilla, "I will never marry him! Leave me, sir—I will never become the wife of this man!"

"It is his majesty's express command that you should be married without delay," said General Saldern; "he has also commanded me to say to you that this scandalous intrigue, insulting to morals and good manners, should no longer be brought before the public. You are both, therefore, banished from his court, from Potsdam and Berlin, and commanded to take refuge at your country seat, and lead there a solitary and quiet life. This is the only punishment he inflicts upon you, and I have nothing more to announce. If agreeable to you, madame, we will go at once!"

"Where?" cried Camilla, drawing back in terror from the general, who approached her.

"In the next room, madame, a priest is waiting, who, at the express command of his majesty, will now perform the marriage ceremony."

Camilla uttered a loud shriek and fell senseless into the arms of *le beau cousin*, who advanced toward her at a nod from the general.

When consciousness returned, the priest was before her and

Kindar at her side. The ceremony was performed, and the unhappy couple left Berlin at once, never to return. The remainder of their lives was passed in sorrow, solitude, and self-contempt.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SEPARATION.

THE three days the king had allowed his brother to make up his mind in, were past. Prince Henry had made up his mind. On the morning of the second day, he had sent off two couriers—one to the king at Sans-Souci, the other to his wife at Rheinsberg. He had remained in Berlin, and had taken possession of the splendid palace opposite the opera-house, that the king had lately built and furnished for him. He had ordered his major-domo to prepare a handsome dinner, as he wished to open his house by entertaining all the nobility of Berlin.

The feast was to take place the third day after the king's interview with the prince.

The courier who left the morning before, carried a letter to Princess Wilhelmina, requesting her in a few cold, ceremonious words, to come to Berlin and preside at the proposed dinner and concert.

This invitation was to the princess a command she dared not resist. She left Rheinsberg early in the morning and arrived at the palace an hour before dinner.

Prince Henry met his wife in the large vestibule leading to the front building. He advanced toward her with a bright smile, passed her arm through his, and led her, pale and trembling, up the steps, making her observe the style of the building and the many conveniences of their new dwelling. He spoke cheerfully, walking slowly so as to give the followers of the princess, who were occupied with her baggage, time to collect around her and witness the perfect understanding between her and her husband. When they had mounted the last step, the prince laughingly pointed to the two halls leading from the stairway.

"Here, madame, commence our separate apartments. To you belong the right, to me the left wing of the castle. I will pass through the hall to the right and lead you to the apartments whose mistress you will now become."

The princess threw a timid, inquiring glance at him. She had been so convinced that her husband would demand a divorce, that she had allowed her thoughts to linger upon this possible mode of escape. Now her heart trembled within her. "Perhaps," mur-

mured she as they passed through the long hall—"perhaps he will murder me as the Duke of Orleans did his wife because she loved the Count de Guiche." She hesitated, therefore, as the prince opened a door and bade her enter. She looked anxiously around for her followers.

"Cannot my maids accompany us?" said she, softly.

"No, madame," said the prince, roughly. "We go alone."

He drew her into the room, entered after her, then closed and locked the door.

Princess Wilhelmina shrieked in terror, and drew away from him. "Why do you lock the door?" said she, trembling. "Do you wish to murder me?"

The prince laughed aloud. "Ah, you wish a tragic end to your romance, madame," said he. "Not so, however. It will be quiet and prosaic. You will act neither the part of a martyr nor a heroine. I wish neither to reproach nor punish you. I leave that to God and your conscience. I wish only to arrange with you the details of our future life. I locked the door, as I do not wish to be disturbed."

"What are these details?" said the princess.

"We will speak of them hereafter, madame. Will you first do me the honor to read this letter I have just received from the king in answer to mine? Have the kindness to read it aloud."

The princess received the letter and read:

"My Dear Brother—Your letter has been a great source of consolation to me, for it assures me that you are again a man, and have overcome your grief. It is not your lot to be only a tender or an avenging husband. You are, before all else, a prince and a man. Both qualifications have duties forcing you to submit to life and to become worthy of it. There is still much to be done in this world by both of us, and a true man should not be turned from his path because a foolish woman places a few thorns beneath his pillow. Stifling his pain, he continues his road quietly. I am glad this is also your opinion—that you have given up all thought of a public scandal and denunciation. In relation to the princess, I give you full power to make any and every arrangement you see fit. As to Kalkreuth, he shall receive the place you mentioned. I have appointed him lieutenant-general of the third army corps in Prussia. He will leave here at once. I desire you to inform him of his promotion. As soon as you dismiss him, send him to me at Sans-Souci. You tell me you are about to give a feast. That pleases me right well. It is better to stifle your pain with bright flowers and gay music, than to tear out your hair and retire to a convent. May your feast be a bright one, and may it last forever! Frederick."

Princess Wilhelmina, having finished the letter, handed it to her husband. "I see," whispered she, softly, "that you have been noble and generous, my husband. You shower benefits upon us instead of just anger."

"I do neither the one nor the other," said the prince, coldly; "I simply wish to pass a peaceful life, and above all things I would not have the world think me unhappy, for unhappy I am not nor ever mean to be."

The princess gave a timid glance at his countenance, so at variance with his words. The last three days had worked such a fearful change. His cheeks were thin and pale, his brow dark and clouded —about his mouth were deep lines of care never more to be effaced. Princess Wilhelmina was deeply touched when she saw this change.

"My husband," said she softly, raising her hands imploringly to him, "have pity on yourself—on me. Hear me before you decide. I feel that I have sinned heavily against you, but I will endeavor to expiate my sin. In looking at you and seeing how much you have suffered, the pain that almost bursts my heart tells me how dear you are to me. I repent—I repent, my husband. I will force my heart to love you, and you alone. From now on, I will be a faithful wife; the one aim of my life shall be to make you happy. Here I swear, as before God's altar, that I will love and obey you as my husband and master. Will you accept this heart, that comes to you full of repentance? Henry, will you?"

She held out her hand, with a bright, beaming glance, but he did not take it.

"No; it is too late," said he. "I raised you a temple in my heart. You have destroyed it, and wish now to build another with the shattered ruins. No, princess; that which the lightning has struck must remain in ashes. I could never believe in the stability of your building, but would be expecting it to fall daily. This temple can never be rebuilt. I forgive, but can never more love you. We are separated before God and our own hearts. But to the world we are still wedded. We shall both inhabit this palace, but we shall seek never to meet one another. On grand *fête* days, when etiquette demands it, we shall dine together, but preside at separate tables. And you must forgive me if I never address you. We are dead to one another; and the dead do not speak. In the summer I shall live at Rheinsberg; the king presented it to me on my marriage with you, and I think I have paid dearly enough for it to be allowed to spend my time there alone. You will not follow me there, but will remain in Berlin, or travel, as it suits you. Do you accept my conditions, madame?"

"Yes, sir," said the princess, proudly. "I accept them. We

will live like two galley-slaves, bound together in chains, without one thought or feeling in unison. You have devised a severe punishment for me, my prince. My only fear is that I am not the only victim—that you also suffer?"

"I told you before, that I wished to punish no one. All I seek is a little rest—a little peace, and your presence in this palace cannot endanger that, for you, madame, have not only annihilated my love for you, but also the remembrance of it. And now, as you have accepted my conditions for our future life, I have nothing more to say than farewell, until death! Farewell, madame; may your life be a happy one!"

"Farewell, prince!" murmured Wilhelmina, in a voice choked with tears. "Farewell! and may God teach your heart to pity and forgive!"

"You will now have the kindness, madame, to arrange your toilet, then to follow me with your court to the great reception-room. We give to-day a splendid dinner. At this *fête* we will take an eternal adieu of the past. It will be the last time we dine together. Farewell, madame; I await you."

He bowed profoundly, then moved to the door. The princess gazed after him breathlessly, and the tears that had long stood in her eyes now rolled slowly down her cheeks.

When the prince had reached the threshold, she started forward, crying in a piteous voice:

"Henry! oh, Henry!"

The prince did not turn, but opened the door and passed out of the room.

Fifteen minutes later, a gay crowd was assembled in the reception-room. The prince received his guests in his usual gay, cordial manner. But the princess was different. She was more quiet and formal than usual. Her eyes did not sparkle; her cheeks were pale in spite of her rouge; her voice was low and tremulous, and the smile she called to her lip was hard and forced. A still more remarkable change had taken place in Count Kalkreuth's appearance. He who generally sparkled with gayety and wit, whose merry jests had been the delight of the court—he who had been the very shadow of the princess, her most devoted cavalier—stood now pale and speechless at a window, gazing sadly at the prince, who was laughing and talking with his guests, and who had passed him repeatedly without turning his head. The courtiers, however, saw only the outward signs of that agony that had almost distracted the count in the last four days.

For four days, since their last meeting in the garden of Rheinsberg, the prince had not spoken to him. It was in vain he had

written and implored an audience. The prince returned his letters unopened. In vain that at almost every hour during these four wretched days he had had himself announced to the prince. Prince Henry would not receive him. And still he felt the inevitable necessity of having an explanation with the prince. His heart craved it as the dying man craves the last consolations of religion. This friendship for the prince, notwithstanding he had betrayed and wounded it, was, and had always been to him a sort of religion; he had sinned against it in the folly of his passion, but he had now come to his senses, and he repented his guilt bitterly. Not a thought of the princess lingered in his heart; it was the prince he yearned after; he must speak to him; he must be forgiven by him. His love for him was greater than ever. Now that he had turned from him, he knew how much he had lost. He had not yet given up the hope of an interview; for this alone had he come to the dinner. But whenever he endeavored to approach the prince, he had turned from him and entered into earnest conversation with some by-standers.

Now the prince stood alone at a window; now or never must the count succeed in speaking to him. Passing through the room hastily, he stood before Prince Henry.

"My prince," murmured the count, softly, "have pity on me. I entreat you to listen to me for fifteen minutes!"

The prince fixed his piercing eyes upon the count's pale, agitated countenance, but did not speak. Then passing proudly before him, he advanced to meet Prince Frederick William, who had just arrived.

The doors of the dining-saloon were now thrown open, and the guests approached the richly-covered table, at one end of which sat the prince and his wife. Not far from them was Count Kalkreuth. For more than two hours he had borne the agony of being near the prince without being addressed by him. For two hours he had stood the inquiring, malicious smiles and glances of the courtiers, who were looking on with delight at his humiliation.

His martyrdom was almost over. Dinner was finished, and all awaited a sign from the princely couple to rise from the table. Prince Henry arose, glass in hand, and said, in a loud voice:

"And now, my guests, I have pleasant news for you; as you are all friends of Count Kalkreuth, what is good news to him will be to you also. His majesty has appointed him lieutenant-general of Prince Frederick William's army corps in Prussia. The king, knowing my true friendship for him, granted me the privilege of announcing his promotion. I am sorry to say that through it we lose him, for his majesty desires him, as soon as we leave the table,

to hasten to Sans-Souci to receive his commission. And now, gentlemen, fill your glasses, we will drink to the lieutenant-general's welfare."

All arose to drink the toast except Count Kalkreuth. His head was bent almost upon his breast, as if he were ashamed to show his pale, agitated countenance. He would have given all he possessed to have flown from the hall. Princess Wilhelmina sat opposite, she had not yet looked at him, but she now threw him a glance full of inexpressible pity, and raised her glass hastily to her lips. It was not wine, but her own tears that she drank.

The prince now led the princess to the reception-room. He stood beside her when Kalkreuth approached. The guests were grouped about the room, every eye was fixed eagerly upon this trio.

Count Kalkreuth was still pale and unmanned; with tottering, trembling steps he advanced toward the princely couple.

The prince turned laughingly to his guests, saying: "See the strange effect of joy. It has transformed our gay and witty count. He is stern and solemn as if, instead of an honor, he had received a degradation."

No voice answered the prince. Finally, in midst of deep silence, the count said:

"I come to take leave of your royal highness before going to that exile which his majesty has kindly chosen for me. For, although it is promotion, you must permit me to reiterate that it is also banishment, for at Königsberg I shall not see my prince. But I shall carry your picture in my heart—there it shall forever dwell."

"We will not make our parting more hard by sweet words," said Prince Henry, emphasizing the last words. "Bid adieu to my wife, kiss her hand, and then God be with you!"

The princess, muttering a few incomprehensible words, gave him her hand, white and colorless as that of a corpse. Count Kalkreuth touched his lips to it, and they were so cold that the princess shuddered as if she had been embraced by death itself.

It was their last meeting!—a cold, formal farewell for life. The count now turned to the prince, who gave him his hand smilingly.

"Farewell, count," said he. Stooping to embrace him, he whispered in his ear: "You once saved my life, we are now quits, for you have murdered my heart. Farewell!"

He turned from him. The count, no longer able to suppress his tears, covered his face with his hands and tottered from the room.

A few hours later he stood in the king's ante-chamber at Sans-Souci. He had just been announced. He waited long—no one came to conduct him to the king; every door remained closed, every thing around him was dull and deserted. It was dark; the sharp

April wind was beating against the window and howling through the chimney. The count's conscience was busy at work in this gloomy chamber. He could endure it no longer, and was preparing to leave, when the door was opened, and an adjutant entered to conduct him to the king's apartments.

The king was in his sitting-room. As Count Kalkreuth entered, he laid aside the book he had been reading, and rose. In a stern, imperious manner he advanced to meet him.

"As my brother desired it, I have appointed you lieutenant-general of the third army corps," said he, harshly. "You leave at once for Königsberg—you know your duties. Go, and endeavor to fulfil them."

"Sire!" said the count, softly.

"Go! not another word!"

Count Kalkreuth, almost unable to make the military salute, left the room, stifling his anger.

The king looked after him thoughtfully. "Poor Henry!" murmured he, softly, "had you also to receive the Judas-kiss from a friend? Poor brother! you were so happy—why did cruel fate disenchant you? There is much in being happy in your own estimation—there is upon the earth no other sort of happiness; and whether true or false, the peace it brings is alike. I, I am so poor that I no longer believe in the one or the other. And still men envy me! Envy a poor, disenchanted, solitary man—envy him because he wears a crown! What sort of an existence have I? My life is full of work, full of sorrow, nothing else! I work for my subjects; they do not thank me, and will greet and welcome my successor some day, be he ever so mean and contemptible, as they once greeted and welcomed me. The love of a people for their king is a love full of egotism and self-interest. Who has ever loved me otherwise than selfishly? I met my friends with an open heart—when with them I forgot that I was a king, but they never forgot it; not one, not a single one loved in me the man. The foolish populace call me a hero, and speak of the laurels that crown my brow, but of the thorns they have woven in it they know nothing. Would I need have no more to do with men, for they have poor, slavish souls! They deceive themselves—they all deceive me."

As the king ceased speaking, he felt his foot touched. Somewhat startled, he looked down. His greyhound Diana was lying at his feet, gazing at him with her large, intelligent eyes. A soft smile crossed Frederick's countenance. Stooping to caress her, he said:

"You come to remind me that there is still love and truth upon the earth, but one must not be silly enough to look for it among

men. Come here, Diana, my little companion; I was wrong to call myself solitary, for are you not here? and then have I not my flute? Is she not a loving, trustworthy friend, to whom every thing can be confided? You two shall be my sole companions this evening."

Raising his flute, he commenced to play softly, walking up and down his room. Diana followed him slowly, listening in seeming devotion to the long, wailing tones of her rival.

Sad and wonderful to hear was the music of this solitary king; like broken, dying sighs and sobs were its tones; and the howling wind, rushing in through the window, added its mournful wail to Federick the Great's song of woe.

NOTES.

(Page 152.)

ODE TO COUNT BRÜHL.

Inscription.—"It is not necessary to make ourselves uneasy about the future."

"High Destiny's unhappy slave,
Absolute lord of too indolent a king,
Oppressed with work whose care importunes him—
Brühl, leave the useless perplexities of grandeur.
In the bosom of thine opulence
I see the God of the wearied ones,
And in thy magnificence
Repose makes thy nights.

"Descend from this palace, whose haughty dome
Towering o'er Saxony, rises to the skies;
In which thy fearful mind confines the tempest,
Which agitates at the court, a nation of enviers.
Look at this fragile grandeur,
And cease at last to admire
The pompous shining of a city
Where all feign to adore thee.

"Know that Fortune is light and inconstant;
A deceiver who delights in cruel reverses;
She is seen to abuse the wise man, the vulgar
Insolently playing with all this weak universe.
To-day it is on my head
That she lets her favors fall,
By to-morrow she will be prepared
To carry them elsewhere.

"Does she fix on me her wayward fickleness,
My heart will be grateful for the good she does me;
Does she wish to show elsewhere her benevolence,
I give her back her gifts without pain—without regret.
Filled with strongest virtue,
I will espouse Poverty,
If for dower she brings me
Honor and probity."

(Page 340.)

"Adieu, D'Argens! In this picture
Thou wilt see the cause of my death;
At least, do not think, a nothing in the vault,
That I aspire to apotheosis.
All that friendship by these lines proposes
Is only this much, that here the celestial torch
May clear thy days while I repose,
And each time when the Spring appears anew
And from her abundant breast offers thee the flowers there enclosed,
That thou with a bouquet of myrtle and rose
Wilt deign to decorate my tomb."

(Page 429.)

"Under a most happy omen,
The goddess of love
Wished that a new sacrifice
Should consecrate to her our bright days.
Already the fagots are lighted,
The altar glows, the incense fumes,
The victim is adorned—
By love itself it is consumed,
The mystery accomplished."

(Page 430.)

"It is thine, swan of the Saxons,
To draw the secret from the miser Nature;
To soften with thy songs the hard
And detestable sounds of a barbarous tongue."

(Page 505.)

"This is not a sparrow
Kept in this cage.
It is one of those birds
Who sing in storms.
Open, friend of the wise,
Break iron and bolts,
The songs in your woods
Shall fly back to you."

(Page 505.)

"The nightingale sings, and this is the reason
That he is taken to sing in a prison.
See now the sparrow, who does so much evil,
Plays with life without fear of cages.
See in this portrait,
Which shows the effect
Of the good luck of rogues, and the misfortune of sages."

THE END.

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